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oshitaka Amano
nterviewed Inside

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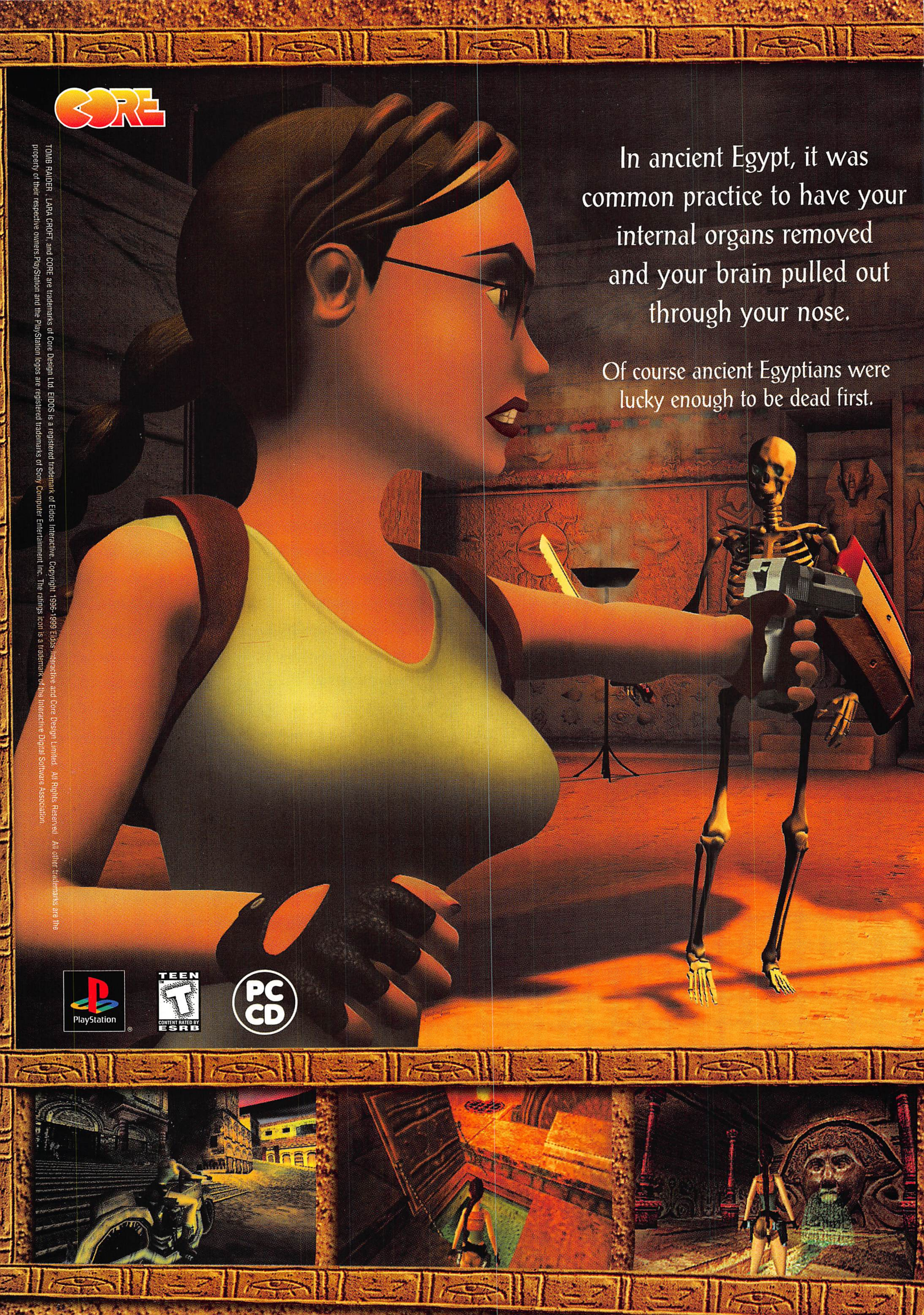
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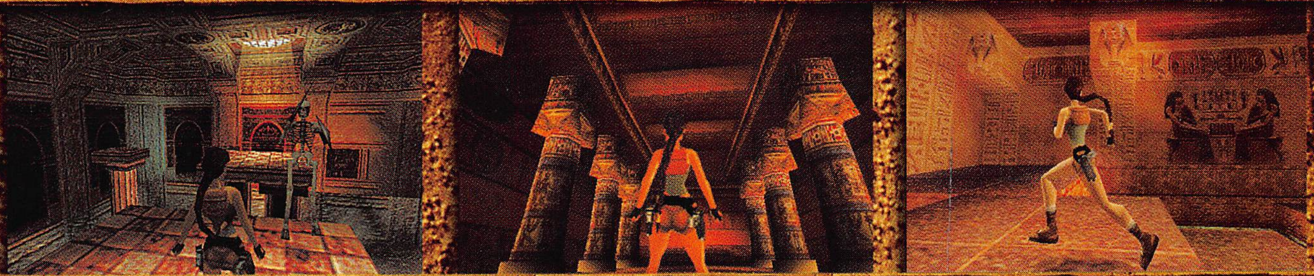
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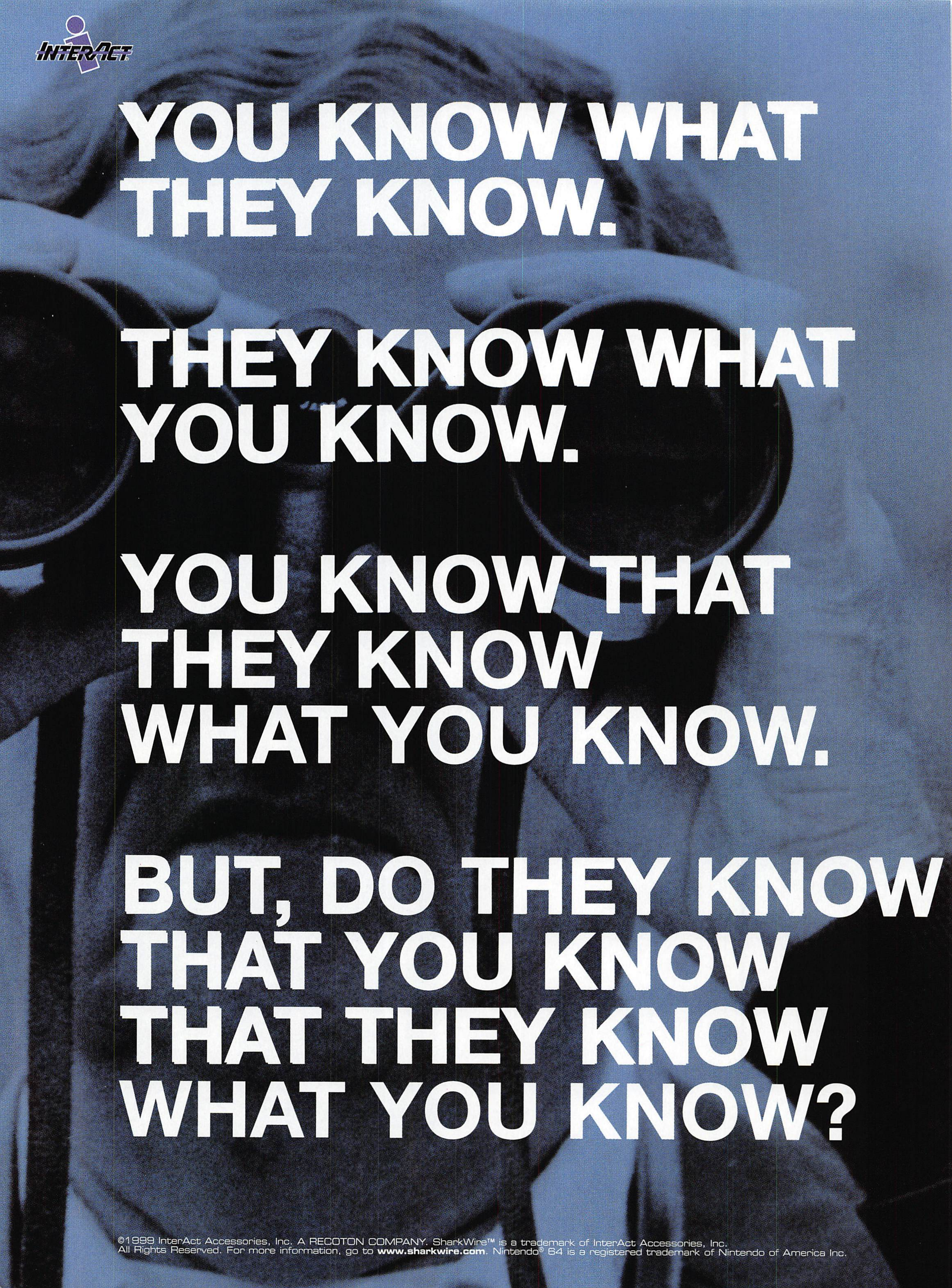


In ancient Egypt, it was common practice to have your internal organs removed and your brain pulled out through your nose.
Of course ancient Egyptians were lucky enough to be dead first.
PlayStation
TEEN
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PC CD
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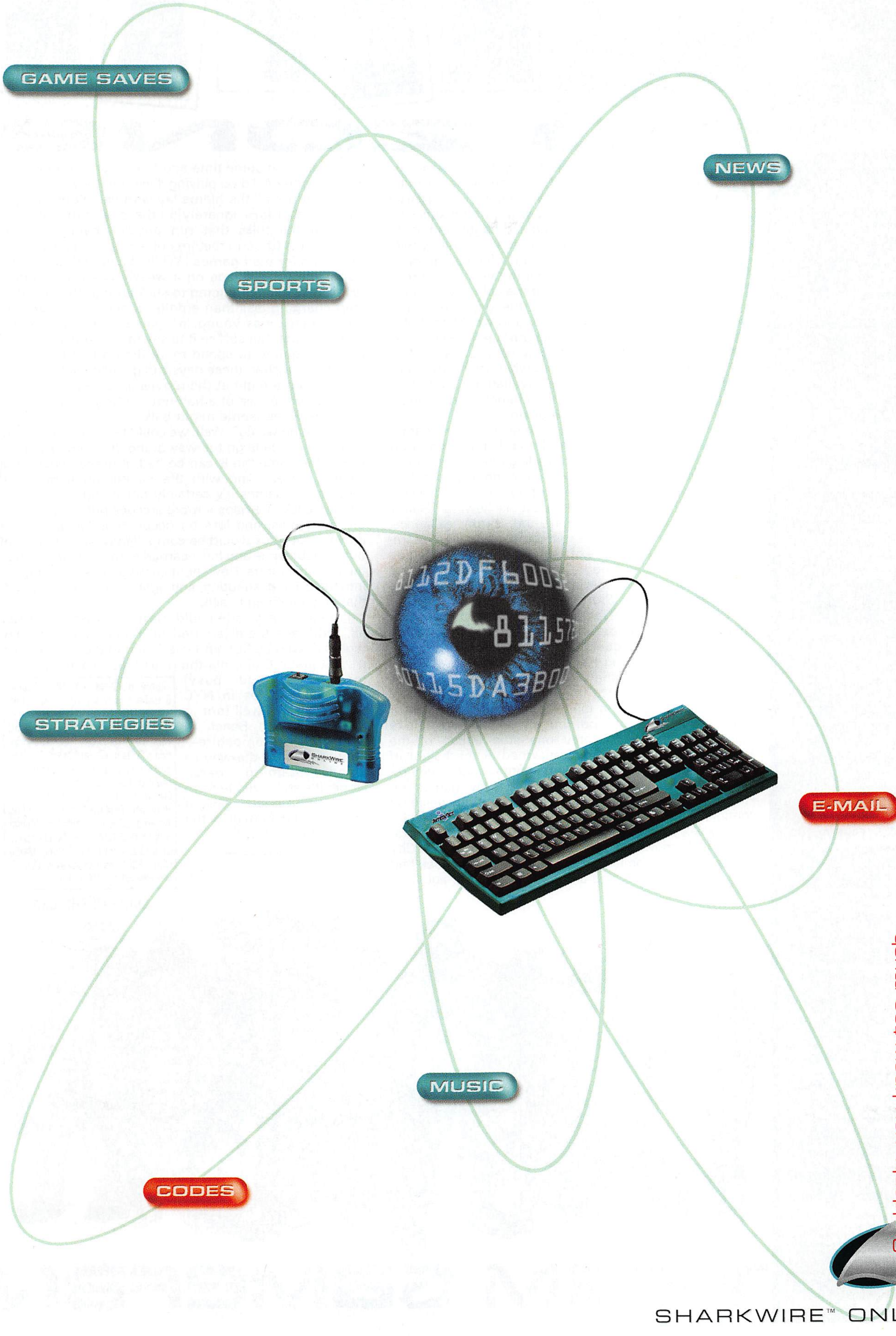

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Breakthrough SUSPENSE/ACTION ADVENTURE game. Beyond your realm of fear. Beyond any 3rd person game created.
fear effect™
It can recognize your fear. Can you?
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INTERACT
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THEY KNOW WHAT YOU KNOW.
YOU KNOW THAT THEY KNOW WHAT YOU KNOW.
BUT, DO THEY KNOW THAT YOU KNOW THAT THEY KNOW WHAT YOU KNOW?
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NATIONAL DISTRIBUTION BY:
Curtis Circulation Company

ISSN# 1092-7212

"An arcade game? On the cover? Are you mad...?!" was the initial reaction by upper management to the idea that we might put a quarter cruncher on the cover. See, they worry about sticky little issues like sell-through, audits, ad pages and so on that us creative types regularly scoff at and decry with all the fury we can muster. After all, why let a niggling little thing like our profitability get in the way of a really cool game, right? However, after a calm explanation wherein it was made clear that the game was also based on a recognizable property and would probably cause the 'casual gamer' to snag umpteen copies, they relented (yep, those accounting types are a surly lot). So, why exactly an arcade game when there are a pile of cover-worthy console games available? Well, if for no other reason than I'd get the chance to rant about the current state of the arcade business.

For those of us that didn't start seriously playing games with PlayStation (there's a lot of you, I know), you may recall the golden years of the arcade game. A time spent wiling away hot summer days, not at the local beach or amusement park, but huddled within the dank recesses of the local quarter crunching pit eschewing healthy doses of sunshine for a more, um, earthy existence. While our more socially-adroit compatriots were learning the migration patterns of the fairer sex, and engaging in something called 'sports,' we were busy memorizing arcane 'Easter eggs'; earning our stripes on games like *Afterburner*, *Toobin'*, *Stun Runner* (and further removed than that, *Defender*, *Tempest* and *Asteroids*); and, of course, burning up our allowances and part-time job money faster than it could possibly be replenished.

However, something has gone completely awry with the current state of the arcade biz—a dark cloud has descended on this once mighty behemoth and nearly laid it low. Blame it on manufacturers for the rampant proliferation of high-end, hugely expensive deluxe machines designed to stay one step ahead of the encroaching console empire spawned at the height of the NES's popularity. Blame it on gamer apathy, wherein they'd rather stay at home and play games on PlayStation rather than the perceived less-than-welcome confines of their worst '80s flashback nightmare (I'm there weekly...'tis a scary place) rather than the ultra-high end Gameworks and 'low-end but cool' Nickle City arcades. Or maybe it's simply the fact that arcades had their time in the sun and belong to a different age; one that passed on some time ago (if not for the miracle of *Street Fighter II*, I'd be playing Taps right now).

Ah, but not all the blame lay with us. Nope, a hefty chunk of that falls squarely on the laps of manufacturers and the folks that run arcade chains such as Gameworks (though they're not alone in this) charging too much for their games. While it can be fun to hang out at the local arcade on a weekly basis, the simply fact is that if they're going to stick around they need to start charging less than a dollar a play. I'll spare you the "When I was young, no game cost more than a quarter" rant, but suffice it to say the insane amount of money required to spend more than a half hour on a 'quarter cruncher' these days can get just a little expensive. When a night at the movies is going to be jeopardized by the cost of a half-hour outing at the arcade, I can see where some might balk.

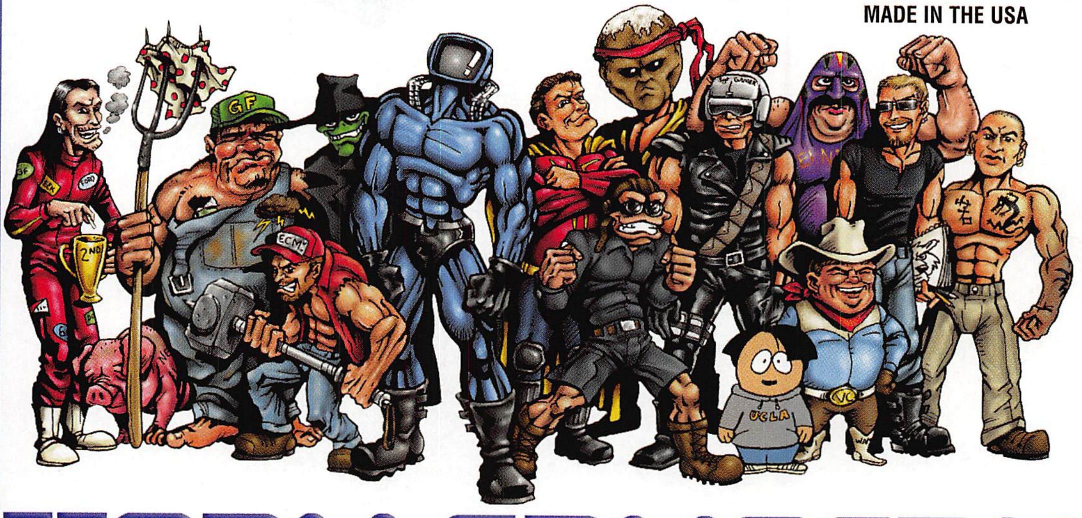
So what do we do? Well, we could throw up our hands and let the arcade go the way of the dinosaur. After all, nearly the same thrills can be had at home, albeit on a smaller scale. And with the painful proliferation of redemption games it's certainly not going to keep me coming back. Perhaps if more arcades put an emphasis on the games, and less on décor (thus keeping costs down) a lot of us would be compelled to spend more of our valuable time and hard-earned cash on them. And to the manufacturers: How 'bout some games that don't fit into the driving, shooting, and fighting molds? Wouldn't that be something to see...

I'm sure the arcade could make a comeback. After all, I still see them jammed on Friday and Saturday nights down at UCLA and Pak-Mann in Pasadena. And it's not just a California thing, as I also seem to recall many late (and busy) nights at arcades in NYC and Buffalo as well (not to mention Weir's Beach in sunny New Hampshire—about as out-of-the-way as arcade gaming gets). Nope, it's still a viable form of entertainment. Now if only I could convince the rest of the world...

Editorial Director
Eric Mylonas

GameFan (ISSN#: 1092-7212) Volume 8 Issue 1 January 2000. Published monthly by Shinno Media Corp. 6301 DeSoto Avenue Unit E, Woodland Hills, CA 91367. One year subscription (12 issues) is $24.99. Foreign and Canada add $10 per year. Please remit in U.S. funds only. Please allow 60 days for your first issue. Periodical Postage Rates Paid at Los Angeles, CA and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send change of address form to: Shinno Media Corp. 6301 DeSoto Avenue Unit E, Woodland Hills, CA 91367.

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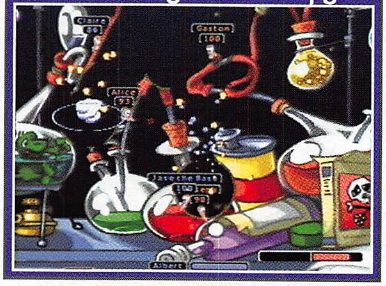
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GAME INDEX


FIGHTING FORCE 2™
You're alone on this mission, so credentials are all you've got to go on.
It's just you and your instinct on this one. So you've only got yourself to blame if you fail. But that's not an option on this mission. Your job as Hawk Manson, operative of the government espionage corps, SI-COPS, is to maneuver in and out of R&D installations on an all new 3D game engine. You've got an arsenal of hand-to-hand combat moves and equipment to the tune of 20+ new weapons. But don't let that inflate your head. Gear up. Get going. The world won't save itself.
INTERPOL
SI-COPS
PROFILE #1635
NAME: Hawk Manson
OCCUPATION: Espionage Operative
SECURITY CLEARANCE: Ultra Magnum
FIELD OF OPERATIONS: Global
WEAPONS PROFICIENCY: Pistol
Grenade Launcher
Shotgun
Sniper Rifle
Assault Rifle
Knife
Sword
Stun Baton
Chain Gun
Industrial Beam Laser
Flame Thrower
Crossbow
Axe
STRATEGIC INITIATIVES: Intercontinental Industrial
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TEEN
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CORE
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TOP TEN MOST WANTED

January 2000

Final Fantasy VIII

Publisher: Square EA



Reader's Top Ten

1) *Final Fantasy VIII* - PS
2) *Jet Force Gemini* - N64
3) *Soul Calibur* - DC
4) *Donkey Kong 64* - N64
5) *Resident Evil 3* - PS
6) *NFL 2K* - DC
7) *Sonic Adventure* - DC
8) *Crash Team Racing* - PS
9) *WCW Mayhem* - PS
10) *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater* - PS

Reader's Most Wanted

1) *Shen Mue* - DC
2) *Perfect Dark* - N64
3) *RE: Code Veronica* - DC
4) *Crazy Taxi* - DC
5) *Chrono Cross* - PS
6) *Gran Turismo 2* - PS
7) *Castlevania Resurrection* - DC
8) *Phantasy Star Online* - DC
9) *Zelda Gaiden* - N64
10) *Legend of Mana* - PS

Shen Mue



GAMEFAN EDITORS' TOP TEN

*IMPORT TITLE



1) *Rayman 2* - N64
2) *Rakugaki Showtime** - PS
3) *Soul Calibur* - DC
4) *Worms: Armageddon* - N64
5) *Ballistic* - PS
6) *Zombie Revenge* - DC
7) *Power Stone* - DC
8) *Donkey Kong 64* - N64
9) *Ristar* - Genesis
10) *Radiant Silvergun** - SS



1) *Virtual On 2 v5.4* - Arcade
2) *Spawn* - Arcade
3) *Monster Rancher 2* - PS
4) *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater* - PS
5) *Winback: Covert Ops* - N64
6) *Rocket* - N64
7) *Bomberman* - Saturn
8) *Prehistoric Isle 2* - Arcade
9) *Death Tank Zwei* - Saturn
10) *Dark Arms: Beast Buster* - NGPC



1) *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater* - PS
2) *Crash Team Racing* - PS
3) *Gran Turismo 2* - PS
4) *Spyro 2* - PS
5) *Grand Theft Auto 2* - PS
6) *Tomba 2* - PS
7) *Ghosts 'N Goblins* - PC
8) *C&C: Tiberian Sun* - PC
9) *Unreal Tournament* - PC
10) *Tribes* - PC



1) *Chrono Trigger* - PS
2) *Monster Rancher 2* - PS
3) *Thousand Arms* - PS
4) *NBA 2K* - DC
5) *RE3: Nemesis* - PS
6) *Final Fantasy VIII* - PS
7) *NFL 2K* - DC
8) *NBA Showtime* - Arcade
9) *Quake II* - PC
10) *Pitfall II* - C64



1) *Crazy Taxi* - Arcade
2) *Crash Team Racing* - PS
3) *Zombie Revenge* - DC
4) *Jet Force Gemini* - N64
5) *JoJo's Venture** - PS
6) *Bangaio** - N64
7) *Metal Slug X* - Arcade
8) *Sonic Adventure* - DC
9) *Prehistoric Isle 2* - Arcade
10) *Sega Rally 2** - DC



1) *EverQuest* - PC
2) *Worms: Armageddon* - PC
3) *NBA 2K* - DC
4) *C&C Tiberian Sun* - PC
5) *Pirates Gold* - Genesis
6) *Monster Rancher 2* - PS
7) *Nuclear Strike 64* - N64
8) *KoF: Dream Match '99* - DC
9) *Donkey Kong* - N64
10) *NBA Showtime* - DC

WIN

THE GAME SYSTEM OF YOUR CHOICE! ENTER TODAY!

All you have to do to enter the drawing is write down a list of your top 10 favorite games and the 10 games you want the most that aren't out yet, on a piece of paper or a postcard then send them to: GAMEFAN TOP TEN, 6301 DeSoto Ave., Suite E, Woodland Hills, CA 91367

First Prize: GameBoy Color

Second Prize: Your choice of one of the Picks of the Month in Viewpoint.

Third Prize: A FREE year of GameFan! The best magazine in the universe!

Congratulations to last month's winners:

First Prize:	Second Prize:	Third Prize:
Robert Mercer	Stan Datz	Winston Chang
San Fran., CA	Atlanta, GA	Worchester, MA

Drawing is limited to one (1) entry per person per month. Drawings will be held on the 21st of each month. The three (3) winners will be notified by mail and listed on this page. For a complete list of rules and regulations write: GameFan Top Ten with self-addressed & stamped envelope.

Developer's Top Ten

This Month's Guest:
Brian Hastings
Vice President, Technology, Insomniac Games

1. *Final Fantasy (series)* - PS
2. *Mario Kart 64* - N64
3. *Metal Gear Solid* - PS
4. *Crash Bandicoot 2* - PS
5. *Star Control 2* - 3DO
6. *Dungeon Master* - Atari ST
7. *Donkey Kong Country 2* - SNES
8. *Lunar Silver Star Story Complete* - PS
9. *Road Rash* - 3DO
10. *Banjo-Kazooie* - N64

Final Fantasy VIII



Publisher: Square EA

"The PS Final Fantasy titles (especially VIII) represent the finest story-telling and character development in the history of games (MGS and Lunar are also excellent in those departments). Star Control 2 and Dungeon Master are two of the most original and perfectly executed games ever. The rest of them are just plain, solid, addictive fun."

EDITOR ROUNDUP

Since we know not all of you are long-time readers for the past eight years (shame on you!), we feel it's important that you become familiar with our staff and tastes. After all, *GameFan's* always been about personality, and we're just one big, happy family... that's always bickering and trying to beat each other up.

ecm@gamefan.com



ECM

ECM loves his shooters. Only when dancing with Death does he truly feel alive. Because in shooters, unlike real life, being small is beneficial. Hmm... maybe this explains his cavalier, 'one man against the world' attitude in real life—think Napoleon, only shorter.

ghiggins@gamefan.com



THE JUDGE

The Judge is all about strategy games. If it has "Tactics" or "Sid Meier's" in the title, he's all over it. But all those lost hours won't help him 'strategize' a way to get a date on Friday night. Perhaps it's his aversion to 'real time' scenarios...

eggo@gamefan.com



EGGO

Eggo is the resident RPG guy. Only in a role-playing game can he instantly grow six inches, get the babe, and swagger around town carrying a big sword <cough>. But 40 hours later... he returns to his trivial existence at the lowliest of positions—*GameFan's* copy editor.

fury@gamefan.com



FURY

For Fury, it's not what genre he likes the best, but which he likes the least: RPGs. Probably because his life mirrors them far too closely: a coming of age story, fraught with peril, intrigue and danger—only there are no heroes, no happy endings... and way too many "dudes."

dangohead@gamefan.com



DANGOHEAD

Dangohead is a jack-of-all-trades (racing, fighting, strategy, action, etc.), master of none. For all the talk you hear of his love for *Virtual On*, it's a shame we never mention how "The People's Dango" routinely gets spanked at *VOOT* in the local arcade.



THE 6th MAN

GameFan's intern, the 6th Man, is a regular target for abuse... partially because he's the "new guy," but more importantly, he plays nothing but *Mario Golf* all day... too bad he's not very good at it. Guess that nickname of UMF is well deserved after all...

THE ART DEPARTMENT

reubus@gamefan.com

Under Construction

REUBUS

If it's got four wheels, Reubus will play it. If it's got two wheels, Reubus will play it. Lemme guess... the driving game guy? No, he gets the table scraps and *Dirt* which nobody wants...

waka@gamefan.com

Under Construction

WAKA

Waka used to play all games, especially RPGs... and then he met the love of his life. Now happily married, his relationship with *EverQuest* is still going strong, and with the expansion pack coming soon, his fate is sealed...

tao@gamefan.com

Under Construction

TAO

Tao doesn't have a favorite genre, but he's psycho enough to log over 200 man years in *Monster Rancher 2*. That dips into the disturbing realms of sausage-dom if you ask me. Do **not** let this man get near *Donkey Kong 64*!

PRODUCTIVITY KILLER OF THE MONTH



Worms: Armageddon

Height: 4.81 in.
Weight: 1.27 lb.
Blood Type: B+
Special Abilities:
Holy Hand Grenade

As our editorial deadline fast approaches, *Armageddon* has struck! The *GF* cave has been completely overrun by Worms! More specifically, Infogrames' *Worms: Armageddon* for the N64 and the PC version by Hasbro. While editors should be churning out articles and art guys should be designing page layouts, the reality is that almost every screen on every computer or TV in this frickin' place has a *Worms* game running on it. Searching every nook and cranny, there's not a screen in this cave that hasn't been infested by the dreaded *Worms Armageddon*...

What makes the game so fun? Other than the obvious multi-player madness and trash-talking that ensues when multiple ed's get into a game, *Worms: Armageddon* is a riot because more often than not, worms are killed due to owner ineptitude (i.e., worms dying by our own hand). Brings back memories of the Worm-ocaust of '99... <shiver> Who would've thought a single Holy Hand Grenade could do so much? Or the time The Judge fired off a super sheep in a tunnel, only to have it rebound and kill him? Nothing's worse than self-inflicted death by sheep...

Curse you, Infogrames and Hasbro! Your mad cow has ruined us!

This month in GameFan's BOX-O-FUN!

Alchemical Magic!

ECM had the idea of doing boxouts for games that were amalgams of each other for the *Spawn* feature this issue. But due to space constraints and his tendency to ramble till the cows came home (no wait, that's just El Niño), that idea was cut... until we resurrected it in Box O' Fun! This month, we look at how developers can take two different games, and with a little alchemical magic, mix them together to form gold...

What do you get when you mix a fruity Japanese dating sim with a fruity Japanese RPG? A fruity, but cool RPG known as *Thousand Arms*.

Mix *Metal Gear Solid* with an ECM-sized budget? Koei's *Winback*!

Tomb Raider box-pulling meets cannibalistic vampires... in *Soul Reaver*.

Armored Core combines with *Monster Rancher* for a truly unique offering from From Software—*Frame Gride*.

Gather the best ideas from *Virtua Fighter* and *Tekken*, add a tremendous heaping of eye candy, release an arcade version that doesn't look as good by comparison, and you have Namco's *Soul Calibur* on Dreamcast.

Mix a marketing exec and a bad idea... and you get *Pepsiman*!

CHICKEN OF THE MONTH

R/C Humvee & General Lee

Infogrames sure knew how to get our attention... giving away a radio controlled Humvee to promote *Test Drive-Off Road 3*! Sounds like a shoe-in for Chicken of the Month. Since we're all a bunch of kids at heart at *GameFan*, any large, remote-controlled vehicles which we could have never owned as a kid (unless we had parents like The Sixth Man's... "a Porsche? Sure, why not? You're 12... you deserve it!") score big points with us. The only problem is the Humvee looks so pretty in the box, nobody wants to take it out. It's one of those "showpiece chickens"...



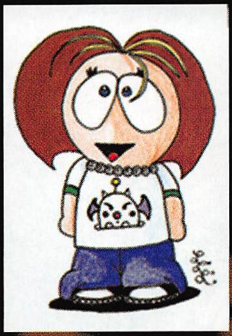
Honorable mention goes to the die-cast General Lee, which we received c/o Southpeak for the upcoming *Dukes of Hazzard* game. Who **doesn't** respect the General Lee? Well... maybe Fury, who commented, "What was that Dukes of Hazzard car called again? The Emerald Jewel or something?" Even after we stopped laughing, we still couldn't figure out what the hell he was talking about...

SAUSAGE OF THE MONTH





Nick Rox cries when he gets alternate endings to *FFVII*, Eggo cries when he gets fan mail. Introducing our SotM, Laura Landolf—hard-core gamer and long-time *GameFan* reader. She recently E-mailed our 'ninja' gamer to let him know how much she loves RPGs, his reviews, and *Final Fantasy II*—her favorite game of all time (Yes! Someone who knows what a **good** *Final Fantasy* is... <cough> Square EA <cough>). Laura's an aspiring artist who hopes to one day work in the industry, either for Square or *GameFan*. She even drew a SD-like version of herself to match Eggo's. So what's to cry about? "Umm... so how old is she again?" 16! <heart stops> Don't worry, man. She'll be married someday...



If you'd like to be Sausage of the Month, send in a picture and sob story citing how you're a Super Sausage, worthy of this distinction. Direct all entries to Posty's address.


MATURE
M
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

VIEWPOINT



G — Graphics
C — Control
P — Play Mechanics
M — Music
O — Originality



40 Winks
PlayStation
GT Interactive
Platformer
Reviewed page 36

I'd been waiting a while for this one, and while it isn't quite the game I was hoping for (it came with one of those, "It's for kids, so be gentle" tags) it's still a solid platforming adventure. Since *40W* doesn't have as much competition on the PS, it stands out a bit better than it otherwise would have. Alas, the ability to change characters is half-baked at best, but this is the game *Rascal* should have been. Now, if only I could catch 40 myself...

G 7 C 7 P 8 M 7 O 7 — 81

Admittedly the kiddy theme isn't appealing, and the scavenger hunt gameplay is strike two... Strike three? The camera spins around so quickly that I get sick! OK, I may have a lower tolerance for jerky camera movements than most, but there's nothing worse than playing a game that literally gives you a headache. If I want to scavenger hunt, there's *Donkey Kong 64* or *Spyro 2*. I'll refrain from ending this with some bad sleeping pun...

G 7 C 7 P 4 M 7 O 7 — 69

Few games have the look and feel of *40 Winks*. It reminds me a lot of *Little Nemo*, and with good reason—it's a similar theme. I like the idea, but having to kill enemies instead of avoiding them isn't my thing. Lush visuals, cute gameplay, decent sound all adds up to a game that ain't bad. Sadly, this isn't my kind of game—I need less thinking and more action. 3D adventure games have never been my cup of tea and this one is just that.

G 8 C 8 P 7 M 7 O 8 — 83



Ballistic
PlayStation
Infogrames
Puzzle
Review page 47

Well, well, what do we have here? An actual original idea for a puzzle game?! My jaded little heart be still. Don't let the inclusions of colored marbles fool you into thinking that this is simply a rip on Taito's *Bust-A-Move* series (Fury was a little puzzled at first—he's a little on the slow side). It took me about 2-1/2 minutes of play time before I was completely hooked. Without a doubt, Infogrames' best game this year... maybe even ever.

G 8 C 8 P 9 M 7 O 10 — 90

It's pretty tough to come up with an original puzzle game nowadays, but *Ballistic* seems determined to buck the trend. A cross between *Zoop* and *Bust-A-Move*, *Ballistic* is a frenetically-paced puzzle title that will challenge even the most experienced gamer. Not as much a brain-bender as a race against time, *Ballistic* has enough action to keep you playing... then again, it also has enough aggravation to make you want to break it...

G 6 C 8 P 8 M 5 O 8 — 80

Bust-A-Move is perhaps one of the best puzzle games ever made. Infogrames could've easily just produced a run-of-the-mill ripoff and sold tons. *Ballistic*, on the other hand, is an excellent addition to the world of super fast-paced puzzlers. Imagine *Bust-A-Move* on a circular loop and shot through a Rytalin dispenser... and you've got *Ballistic*. An excellent 2-player "Vs." game, and if you do have a multi-tap, I'm on my way over...

G 6 C 8 P 9 M 7 O 8 — 83



Grand Theft Auto 2
PlayStation
Rockstar
Crim Sim
Review page 39

I really wanted to like this game... I mean it. Problem is, it's the same game we played last year which equals snooze-time after about an hour of play. While some of the new ideas were somewhat cool (the different gangs, et al) this still ranks as the worst game that DMA has ever produced (and I wasn't the biggest fan of *Uni Racers*). Repetitive, monotonous, in fact I think I may have found the perfect way to grab those 40 winks I needed.

G 7 C 7 P 4 M 6 O 5 — 60

My biggest gripe about the original has been addressed! Thanks to improved graphics, it doesn't hurt any more to look at this game. Sure, it's not the prettiest game on the PlayStation, and it's definitely not one you'd want to bring home to Mother... unless Mother enjoys carjacking, cop-killing, and running people over with an ambulance. Definitely worthy of the Mature rating, and not for Little Timmy. But fun nonetheless...

G 7 C 7 P 8 M 8 O 9 — 84

I was a huge fan of the original and was thrilled to get my sticky fingers on a copy of this puppy. Big-ass missions, violence out the wazoo, and some great gameplay make this a joy. I can tell you that running from the pigs and mowing down John Q. Public in your hot wheels has never been more fun. Be warned, though, that if your mom catches you playing this game, it's straight to your room without supper! And then we get mail...

G 7 C 8 P 8 M 9 O 8 — 89



Medal of Honor
PlayStation
Electronic Arts
First Person Shooter
Review page 38

The theme: brilliant. The execution: not so brilliant. While all the ideas that went into this game were solid, I simply can't play any more first person shooters on PS. Yeah, yeah, call me biased but with the ugly textures and a nastily steep learning curve, this game isn't winning any accolades from me. Sure Fury liked it, but any game where he can shoot Nazis is a good game in his book... as for The Judge, he's still trying to get over the War...

G 6 C 6 P 7 M 8 O 9 — 75

Gonna kill me some Hessians... oh wait, wrong century. *Medal of Honor* takes you behind the lines at the height of WWII. What I thought would totally suck actually turned out to be one of the most impressive first person shooters for the PlayStation. Cool levels, top-notch enemy AI, and lots of guns and grenades... and consultation work by The Man himself, Dale Dye, to boot. Nazi killing... those were the days...

G 7 C 7 P 8 M 8 O 8 — 84

Any game that allows me to take out an army of Nazi soldiers is a good game in my book! Although I expected more from a title that has Speilberg's name in the opening credits, I was still quite impressed with Dreamworks' WWII FPS. Graphically, however, *MoH* could have definitely benefitted from some cleaner textures and the control requires a bit of getting used to. Between the cinemas and Nazi bodycount, I'm hooked!

G 7 C 7 P 9 M 8 O 8 — 85



Ready 2 Rumble
PlayStation
Midway
Boxing
Review page 41

OK, the game is still fun, but I'm starting to have a real problem with 60 fps gameplay versus anything less. I can overlook the fact that the models took a hit; the color took a hit; and the overall presentation took a hit, but after going to the startling world of 60 fps, it's real hard going back. Now that games are back to where they were during 16-bit (with ace control thanks to the high frame-rate) it's a bitter pill to swallow...

G 7 C 8 P 8 M 7 O 8 — 78

I didn't care for *R2R* on DC, and little brother on PS is much the same. The gameplay's just too basic, and it's not very fun pummeling each other without much strategy. Granted, compared to *Knockout Kings* and *Contender*, *R2R* comes out smelling like a rose. But I'd rather play the import *Boxer's Road*... or even some SNES *Super PunchOut* (yes, I still play that game) before getting ready to ruuuumm-mmmbleeeeeeee!!!

G 8 C 7 P 5 M 9 O 8 — 79

Its not easy going from gorgeous cutting-edge Dreamcast graphics to... well, the PlayStation. *Ready 2 Rumble* is, in its most basic level, a really fun game. And so, if you don't already own a DC, I'd certainly recommend it. It plays like a comical arcade boxing game and the character design is pretty humorous as well. Best not to compare the DC rev to the PS version... you'll drive yourself absolutely insane! Where did all my pretty colors go?

G 7 C 8 P 8 M 7 O 8 — 81



Quake II
PlayStation
Activision
Shooter



Sorry, I've already played the Nintendo 64 version, and I'm not impressed. Hey, if you've got nothing but a PlayStation, then this game deserves your attention. As for me, I've played *Quake* and *Quake II* for everything else, plus I don't want to frag three friends at 2 frames per second, gimme that N64 version. Who really finds it even remotely amusing to wander through corridors without anything or anyone to shoot at? I pass...

G 7 C 6 P 7 M 6 O 6 **70**



Quake 2, my favorite PC game of all time, goes under the PlayStation knife... The results are visually not as bad as I'd feared. But *Q2* has always been about multi-player fraggin' (just look at *Q3*). When I say multi-player, I'm not talking four people; I'm talking '16 players on a server railgun practice,' something which consoles like the N64 and PS cannot do. Although DC has the potential... The single-player game has never been a draw.

G 7 C 7 P 6 M 7 O 5 **71**



I don't own a PC and if I did, it wouldn't be to play games (I'd buy it for the nifty calculator). So needless to say, I've admired *Quake 2* from afar, and while I was impressed with the N64 version, found the PS rev to be, well—are ya ready for this—more of the same. If you don't have a multi-tap, you're screwed as far as multi-play is concerned. Simple fact is, if you don't own a PC, the N64 or PS version is the next best thing—fragalicous!

G 7 C 7 P 8 M 7 O 6 **78**



Vandal Hearts II
PlayStation
Konami
Strategy RPG



What happened here? I liked the first game. Not since *VF-X2* has a sequel offended me this much. *Vandal Hearts II* is a pile of poop (that's the PG version). I can't recommend you play this, let alone buy it. The PlayStation has become the system of choice for RPGs and with that said, don't waste your money on this. There's so much better out there—even if it is something like *FFVIII*. Pray that Konami stops this series now or makes it all better.

G 7 C 6 P 7 M 8 O 6 **70**



Am I supposed to want to play this game? Any sane gamer (if you can count Cerberus as sane) would tell you that the original *Vandal Hearts* was about a million times better... no, scratch that, you can't even compare the two! In a sea of amazing PS RPGs (*FF8, Grandia, Jade Cocoon*) *VHII* stands out like a red-headed stepchild... no, scratch that as well, it stands out like Fury at a *GF* softball game—so how many swings do I get anyway?

G 7 C 6 P 6 M 8 O 6 **68**



Oh boy, what happened here? I was one of those rare individuals that preferred *VH* over *Suikoden* back in the day (they called us the 'crazy ones'). However, it's quite clear that I'll not be playing this game anymore. I don't know if it's because of *FF Tactics*, but games like this need to bring more to the table these days. However, the poor graphics and lackluster gameplay aren't going to help this one stand out from the overcrowded *RPG* field this time around.

G 6 C 7 P 6 M 7 O 5 **73**



Warpath
PlayStation
Electronic Arts
Fighting
Review page 46



Yikes! What the hell happened here? I'm a sucker for anything with dinosaurs in it (I actually was able to play *Primal Rage* for a whole hour before I puked!), but I have to draw the line somewhere. This game is a disaster. The dino models look great, but the play mechanics are some of the worst ever. Fact of the matter is, fighting games with animals never work... ever. *Brutal Paw* is the only time it has come close... and this game is no *Brutal Paw*.

G 8 C 4 P 4 M 5 O 4 **47**



Wow, after the *Primal Rage* series lost its wee share of the fighting game market, I thought I'd never see another Vs. dino game. Only this time around, we're left with a pseudo clone of *PR*, and a bad one at that. While the graphics are sharp and a few of the moves are kind of interesting to pull off (for the first couple of times, mind you), I just can't get into this one. If you want a good dino game try *Dino Crisis*. I'll pass on this one.

G 8 C 5 P 6 M 6 O 4 **58**



For every *GoldenEye* there's a dozen other sub-par licensed titles... and then there's *Warpath*. Words cannot adequately describe exactly how poor this game is. Let's see, throw the masses a pretty-looking game with NO gameplay and they'll eat it up because they don't know any better. This is the nuclear bomb of cash runs: nobody does it bigger or better. Keep milkin' that license, EA, I can taste the strawberry milk from here...

G 8 C 4 P 3 M 5 O 2 **30**



Chef's Luv Shack
Nintendo 64
Acclaim
Party
Review page 58



I'm not much of a *South Park* fan, at all. The humor is okay in small doses, but anything beyond five minutes and I start to get a headache. Enter *Chef's Luv Shack*—I love this game. The pop culture references combined with the bathroom humor we know so well make this a perfect party. Who wants to play *GoldenEye* when you and your friends can watch Cartman's Anal Probe. A must for *South Park* fans and a must play for anyone else.

G 8 C 8 P 9 M 5 O 8 **89**



Believe it or not, one of my all-time favorite arcade games is Capcom's *Quiz Dragons* (also one of the only quarter games left). Trivia games—if done correctly—can be loads of fun, and *Chef's Love Shack* is no exception. Maybe it was the fart jokes (gotta love them) or the bagging on a certain sexual preference that had me rolling on the floor. Either way, I haven't lost interest in Matt and Trey's brain child, even in a sea of lame merchandising tie-ins.

G 8 C 7 P 9 M 4 O 7 **80**



While Fury is mad, I'll also admit to being a quiz game junkie when I used to beat my friends senseless at *Jeopardy* back on the good ol' C64. Problem here is that if you don't watch a lot of *South Park*, you may have a slight problem with a great deal of the questions. The mini-games are very cool (they're no *Mario Party*, though) and some of the questions are tough, but this is still *Jeopardy* meets *SP*. Your mileage may vary.

G 6 C 7 P 7 M 7 O 8 **80**



Donkey Kong 64
Nintendo 64
Nintendo
Platformer
Review page 56



I hate to say this, but *DK* is a great game. It's not my sort of thing, but it's amazing. Sure we're controlling primates, but I can have fun with this. I've added 10 points because of the presence of old school *Donkey Kong*. That's right, an old *Donkey Kong* machine is hidden somewhere in this massive land. Once you find it, you can play to your heart's content. We spent at least two hours trying to get past that damn pie factory. Play this until *Zelda*...

G 10 C 9 P 8 M 8 O 6 **90**



Maybe they call their games Rare because they come out so infrequently. I've waited a looong time for a 64-bit *DKC* and now that it's here, I'm wondering if I really have the time to play through it—all of it! Though you'd be crazy to say that *DK64* is really a different game than *Banjo*, you'd also be crazy to say you weren't impressed with it. This puppy is too immense and good-looking not to sell in the millions. Long live the King... Kong.

G 9 C 8 P 8 M 8 O 6 **94**



OK, here's where I stand on *DK64*: fantastic game, brilliant graphics, more hours of gameplay than you can shake a can of monkey spit at... and it's still second best. See, if there wasn't a *Rayman* sequel floating around out there right now, this pseudo-sequel to *Banjo* (believe me, you'll be reeling from deja vu) would have rated better. Still, it's a LONG and DEEP game, but it's still a scavenger hunt, and I prefer my games to be a little something more.

G 9 C 8 P 9 M 6 O 6 **91**



Earthworm Jim 3D
Nintendo 64
Rockstar
Platformer
Review page 59



Please stop the madness. No one really cares about *EWJ* anymore. It doesn't help that the original team disbanded last millennium either. The visuals are bunk, and game is simply boring. Some of the 'puzzles' are a chore. *EWJ* is not a good license or game for that matter. Maybe, and I say maybe, Jim would have some hope if this was a 2D adventure but there's no room for an annelid with a robot suit in the world of 3D adventure games.

G 6 C 7 P 6 M 4 O 4 **64**



2D is where it's at, people! While some games can make the often rough transition from the world of 2D to 3D, Jim unfortunately has not. Let's just say that Doug TenNapel would be turning over in his grave—if he was dead of course. I suspect even Dave Perry finds this one a bit painful—sad that *Earthworm Jim 3D* is not affiliated in any way with Shiny. Imagine the *Wild 9* engine implemented on a *Jim* game... should I start crying?

G 7 C 6 P 5 M 5 O 6 **66**



Oh my God... this is pain. Where have all the sane people gone? Jim, of all 2D superstars, should not have gone 3D—especially if it's going to turn out this painful. Busted cameras, unresponsive control, ugly visuals, and the biggest sin: a lousy sense of humor, all conspire to make me question what goes through the minds of some developers. If you can't do it right (i.e. *Zelda, Sonic, Mario*, etc.) **DON'T DO IT AT ALL.**

G 4 C 5 P 4 M 5 O 5 **54**



Turok: Rage Wars
Nintendo 64
Acclaim
Shooter
Review page 62

Um, well, uh... I was hoping for *Turok 3* and I get this instead? It's a decent game but that's about it. Problem is, the fact that this game is multi-player oriented and it still isn't as good as *GoldenEye*. I'm stopping short of callin' this one a cash run, but **just** short. The frame-rate is decent, but the level design leaves much to be desired and this comes off as feeling like nothing more than placeholder for a true sequel.

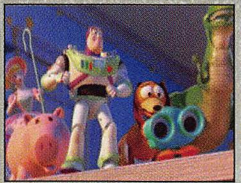
G 7 C 7 P 7 M 6 O 5 **78**

PC gamers get *Quake III*; console gamers get a rehash of a year-old game. Now there's bots so you can fine-tune those multi-player skills when you're alone. But does that warrant another $50? I don't think so... especially with *Perfect Dark* looming in the near future <crossing fingers>. Only if you regularly have Friday night *GoldenEye* should you even consider this, because you already own *Turok 2: Seeds of Evil* already, right? ...RIGHT?!

G 10 C 8 P 8 M 10 O 2 **68**

Having logged at least two summers' worth of play on *GoldenEye*, I can tell you right now that *Rage War* is the next best thing (in terms of multi-player games) on the N64. The level design is tops (especially the *Tron*-inspired stage). Combine that with an awesome weapon selection, crisp visuals on par with PC games, and the result is one of the best multi-player-only games on console! But what?! No Cerebral Bore?!

G 8 C 8 P 8 M 7 O 6 **91**



Toy Story 2
Nintendo 64
Activision
Platformer

This is for kids. Plain and simple (and I didn't even need a PR person to tell me so—they know it, I know it). That being said, the game is moderately fun, but I'm gonna side with Fury on this one in saying that I preferred the old Genesis/SNES *Travellers Tales* rev to this one. It's not that it's a bad game, it's that it's for little Timmy, not big Bobby. Solid graphics with very basic game-play make this something your little brother might like... I pass.

G 8 C 7 P 6 M 6 O 7 **76**

Here's Di$ney cashin' in one more time with a game that'll sell on name-recognition alone. Great graphics, stellar play mechanics, tight control? Bah! Who needs it? We've got "Buzz Lightyear to the rescue!" In case that low-flying sarcasm went over your head, *TS2* lacks solid visuals, gameplay, or control—all things you should demand out of a 3D platformer/scavenger hunt. Di$ney's poisoned the waterhole! *DK64* is a far better choice.

G 5 C 6 P 6 M 7 O 7 **61**

I hate to say it, but the original Genesis version of *Toy Story* was a much better game. The level design and stage objectives just didn't grab me this time around compared to the last *TS*. These characters are simply too cool not to star in a grade A title. Though kids will certainly stand beside this one, I'm too overloaded with Rare's Magilla Gorilla to find the hours for Buzz and company. I can't wait for the film but I'll save the game for li'l Tim.

G 7 C 7 P 6 M 5 O 6 **73**



Worms: Armageddon
Nintendo 64
Infogrames
Strategy
Review page 61

One of the best N64 games of the year... and no, that's not a joke. We've been playing this one virtually non-stop since it landed at the office and it's not hard to see why. While the graphics are simple, the *Scorched Earth*-style gameplay (also reminiscent of Saturn *Death Tank*) makes for an incredibly addictive masterpiece from Team 17. Best yet, it's also coming to PS and DC as well! Grab some friends and kiss your free time goodbye!

G 6 C 7 P 10 M 6 O 9 **95**

Whew! So glad I finally found a game I liked this month. It was lookin' pretty grim for a while there... *Worms*-fever has infected the office, and the more the merrier! This strategy game requires skill and thinking. Throw in a bunch of personality and humor, and you've got a guaranteed classic. OK, maybe it's not the visual masterpiece you envisioned for N64, but how can you argue with super sheep, mad cows, and homing pigeons?

G 5 C 8 P 9 M 8 O 7 **96**

I'll admit, I've never played *Worms* before playing it on the N64. I can't believe what I've been missing. A four-player game without tiny screens? Count me in! This one reminds me of *Cannon Fodder*, but better. A huge cache of weapons, tons of stages, and cute animation make this one accessible for anyone. *C&C* and *StarCraft* have nothing on *Worms*. If you're looking for a man's strategy game, look no further.

G 9 C 9 P 9 M 7 O 9 **95**



Evolution
Dreamcast
Ubi Soft
RPG
Review page 66

Though I don't generally like RPGs, I do have a soft spot in my heart for *Evolution*. Compared to the rest of the DC's RPGs (in Japan) this one stands out like a sore thumb. While the character design is truly top-notch and the story will keep you interested throughout your journey, I expected more in the visual department. While the graphics are the best you'll find in terms of DC RPGs at the moment, I'm still holding out for *Eternal Arcadia*.

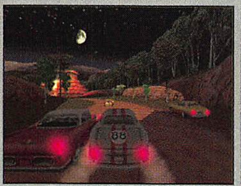
G 8 C 8 P 9 M 8 O 8 **90**

Granted, this is the best RPG on Dreamcast... but is that saying much at this point? There's a lot to like about *Evolution*: good graphics, long term play value, and a sound gameplay foundation. But at the end of the day, this is still a randomly-generated dungeon RPG, and I've never liked randomly-generated dungeon games (except for *Diablo* on PC)... Even *Chocobo's Mysterious Dungeon* suffers from this as well.

G 8 C 8 P 7 M 7 O 8 **83**

Evolution is the RPG that the Dreamcast needs—or should I say wants? *Evolution* is above average and that's it. *Evolution* isn't an evolution for the RPG genre, but it'll do, with its world, story, and rather boring interface. I honestly can't speak badly of *Evolution*, but don't plan on me playing through this one. The characters don't have that spark that's necessary for extended play. And as with any RPG, that's muy importante.

G 7 C 7 P 7 M 7 O 8 **86**



Speed Devils
Dreamcast
Ubi Soft
Racing
Review page 68

We all know how I feel about racing games (don't like 'em, for the newbies)—strike one. We also know how I feel about PC-to-console ports (don't like 'em, for the newbies)—strike two. We all know that I don't like games that aren't any fun (figure it out, newbies)—strike three. After playing through a very solid racing game in *Tokyo Xtreme Racer*, Ubi's gonna have to do a lot more to fill up my tank on this sub-par racer. There's always *Rayman 2*, however...

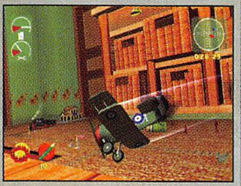
G 7 C 6 P 6 M 6 O 6 **68**

Let loose the floodgates! The DC is fast becoming the console of choice for racing games. Too bad I'm not really into them... Call me snobby, but I'll only play the best racing games, and right now that remains *Tokyo Xtreme Racer*. *Speed Devils* falls in the decidedly average category. Looks nice, controls all right... it's just not very fun. Considering the many racing games to come, this isn't a must-have title... just Cruis'on by...

G 8 C 7 P 7 M 7 O 7 **70**

It's a well known fact that I love racing games. It's also a well known fact that I don't like *Speed Devils*. I don't go to the extremes and play sims, but you won't catch me playing *Cruis'n* either. *Speed Devils* looks great and plays okay, but the courses drag on and bore the hell out of me. The selection of vehicles is also a downer. I don't want to ride in some beat-up old muscle car. Gimme an Audi TT any day of the week over this...

G 8 C 7 P 7 M 6 O 7 **74**



Toy Commander
Dreamcast
Sega
Action

Unique is the name of the game when you're talking about *Toy Commander*. The French have come through in a big way with *TC*—easily one of the most creative and fun DC titles yet to surface. Graphics, gameplay, level variety... this one has it all! Somehow Ubi Soft must have missed out on this one (probably busy acquiring the rest of the world's games) cause it's landed as an official Sega product. This is what *Toy Story 2* should have been like!

G 9 C 8 P 9 M 7 O 8 **96**

Well, it doesn't have the name recognition, but I'd much rather play this than *Toy Story 2* on N64. Sure, there's a 64-bit difference between systems... but *TC* has all those elements which *TS2* lacked—great visuals, solid play mechanics, and slick control. The only thing missing is long-term play value. *TC*'s a game you can pick up and play right away, but I doubt you'll be playing two weeks later. A good rental... unless you have money to burn.

G 8 C 8 P 8 M 7 O 9 **85**

Hey, let's play *Army Men* on the Dreamcast without the license! That's how I feel when I play *Toy Commander*. It's like being in *Toy Story* or *Army Men* without the nifty characters—this isn't something that you want to try at home. Without the gimmicky characters, I have no interest. How about Sega giving us an *Afterburner* or *Space Harrier* before forcing us to fly through kitchens and bathrooms. I guess I don't like cute games...

G 8 C 9 P 8 M 7 O 8 **80**

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If I Was a Game Designer: A Story in Three Paragraphs by ECM

If you're an aspiring game designer, you may have noticed that there is a serious dearth of original ideas left to be 'baby sealed' to death—for example: "Hey! There's some life in that *Tetris* thing. Get it!!!" As is the sad case with movies and books, all the original ideas were used up by Shakespeare circa the late 16th, early 17th century. Now gaming has fallen into the same ugly trap; thankfully we can't point to any one culprit in gaming's case (but I bet if Shakespeare was alive...). Since every original idea had been done ad nauseam by the early '90s, it's only natural that you may have had a hard time coming up with something that wasn't based on, however loosely, something else. Not that I'm not one for a complete lack of innovation—some of my favorite games are complete re-treads with about as much originality as "Dangohead has a giant cranium" and "ECM is about as tall as one of his action figures" jokes (I firmly deny the latter, naturally).

Ah, but there's a way to almost circumvent this nasty malady: Instead of basing a game on the flavor of the year, take two good ideas and put them together; it's the gaming version of chocolate and peanut butter and tastes great/less filling (two phrases that should never have anything to do with something labeled 'lite,' I might add). What you'll get is a game that might be a little harder to classify and even <gasp!> a *tad* original.

Now if I had it my way (it's not as bad as it sounds), I'd create a game that was equal parts fighting game and first person shooter—only you'd have to toss the first person part to implement the hand-to-hand fighting; maybe something like *Power Stone* meets *Quake*. Combine the elegant simplicity of *PS* with the ultra-destructive weaponry of id's finest hour; retain the 'more than 2-player' aspect of the latter; set it in some amazingly designed levels; and voila! You might just get something worth writing about. Apparently Capcom felt the same way, as they've gifted us with a game that may just save arcade games as we know it: *Spawn, The Demon's Hand*.







P PREVIEW	ECM: I MADE THIS!	DEVELOPER - CAPCOM	1-4 PLAYERS
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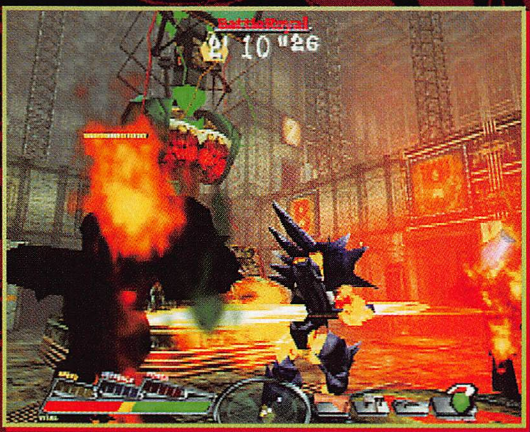




A Brief Appetizer to Whet the Palate

I've never been a fan of Todd McFarlane's *Spawn.* I came from the pre-Image Comics school of thought that, except for *rare* occasions (John Byrne, Mike Mignola, Jim Starlin), artists should **never** be writers. They're two different crafts and just because you excel at one **does not** mean you'll automatically be good at the other. However, there's no question that the character designs in *Spawn* were stunning. Sure, Spawn was an amalgam of Todd's work on *The Amazing Spiderman* (Spiderman himself, and more importantly, the Prowler), but he added a whole new level of detail and intricacy to the characters he made his mark on. And while I also wasn't the biggest fan of the art style (anatomy? Who needs anatomy?!), I could appreciate the imagination that went into them. Unfortunately, just about every arena of pop culture *outside* of comics has been cruel to Spawn: movies, cartoons, and even video games. Up until now, Sony had been the sole licensee of the character and they churned out two decidedly lackluster efforts (once again, my diplomacy skills are 'go'): one on SNES and one on PS (the latter being the more horrific of the two). There's also the Game Boy Color rev from Konami but I'm not even going to open that gateway to Hell. Ah, but what could one of the most incredible game developers in the world do with some of the most incredible character designs in the world?





Magic!

The statement above about *Spawn* saving arcades as we know it may seem bold (or even very *GameFan*-like (we're never gonna shake that rap, are we?)), but let me assure you that it isn't used altogether lightly. Where Capcom saved arcades once before with the godsend that is *Street Fighter II*, they now have a chance to work that magic again. As arcades fall off in droves, something is needed to bring the people back; something that can rekindle that dying ember into a raging inferno. *Spawn* is **that** game.

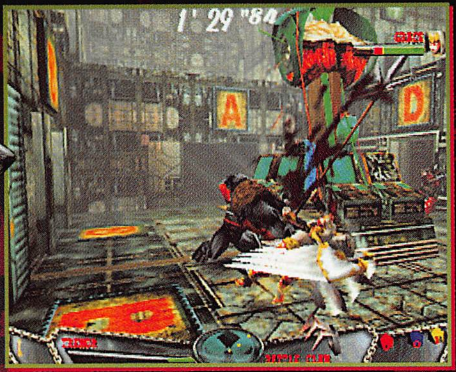


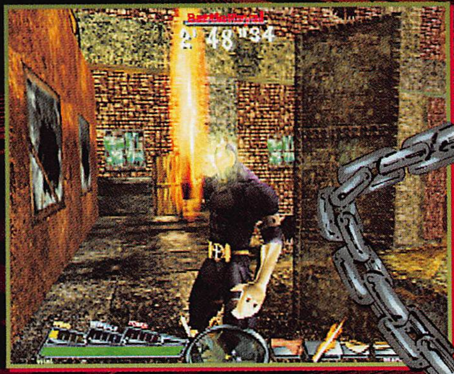












The Gates of Heaven

It's hard to pick a starting point from which to relay exactly what makes *Spawn* so utterly enthralling: graphics, gameplay, level design, etc. However, I'll pick the crowd-pleasing favorite to go with first—graphics (like I'm the only one that ever skipped to the graphics paragraph in a game review... right).

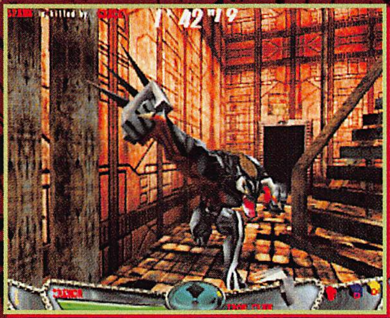
Simply put: unbelievable. In light of the recent revelation of Sony's PS2 hardware, you'd think that we'd be falling all over ourselves with statements like: "If this game had been around before PS2, then..." or "wow, this looks really good... for NAOMI," but no, you'll find no such nonsense here (maybe further into the preview, but definitely not here).

The texture-work is utterly amazing. The amount of time and effort expended on each and every surface conveys the same sense of reality as those crazy wooden steps in *Sonic Adventure's* Mystic Ruins—architecture which the DC/NAOMI handled so well. While the texturing on the character models is fairly awe-inspiring (check out Brimstone for a perfect example of this), it's the actual environs that receive the most intricate detail. In fact, although the levels didn't have names at the time of this preview, there was one connected by stone-work tunnels that was completely and utterly stunning (naturally this was showcased in the demo mode).

Special effects are rife throughout this comic booky world. The flame effects deserve special note as they're the most realistic yet realized on NAOMI (and presumably, Dreamcast) hardware.

Spawn is truly a masterwork, and yet another high watermark for a hardware setup that cranks out new high watermarks on a monthly basis—even in light of PlayStation 2 and thousand dollar plus computers equipped with the latest 3D accelerators.





The level design in *Spawn* is currently a mixed bag: while certain levels are unbelievable, others are pretty average. However, one of the arenas is simply one of the best-designed to ever grace a video game. It features a giant rotating room interconnected by a series of tunnels that lead to a rooftop 'drop in' point for nasty ambushes and other assorted dismemberment and mayhem.

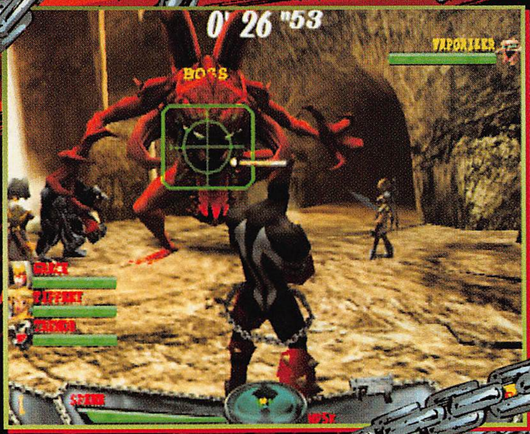
And that's where this game truly excels. While the one-player contest was still quite early in the rev we previewed, the multi-player game is where the action is really at. Two-on-two teams or 'every man for him (or her) self,' the gameplay is incredibly addicting. Not surprising when you combine something like *Quake* and *Power Stone* into a nearly seamless whole. Anybody that's played a game of *Quake* knows exactly how intense an adrenaline-rush can be garnered from the head-to-head play. Throw in fighting game mechanics and it takes on a whole new level of addiction. Running around levels, ambushing foes with M-60s, flaming swords, and sawed-off shotguns certainly makes for a visceral experience... all the while covering you in viscera.















DC-Bound?

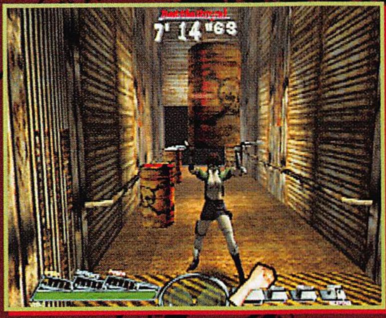
While it's typically a no-brainer that a NAOMI game equals a Dreamcast port, Capcom still wouldn't comment on it being a "sure thing." It seems the major sticking point is the simple fact that while this game has a perfectly serviceable single-player experience, it's really all about the 4-player game. Ugly little sticking points like latency (between four separate opponents) could potentially make for some very rocky play over the DC's stock 56k modem. Perhaps some form of direct-dial or a 4-player link cable could remedy that (in my wildest dreams)? Suffice it to say, it's coming; let's just hope they can iron out the multi-player kinks.

Is That All?

I apologize for the brevity upon which each of the above elements are dealt with; after all, I only had four pages to partially convey the true scope and grandeur of this game (while including a heaping of screens and art). And yes, it's very probable that this game will set a new level of excellence for arcade games—who says console games get all the glory? Heck, I'm still surprised that someone is making completely original arcade games. If I have to play one more racing or fighting game, I may just have to turn in my arcade gamer credentials. **ECM**









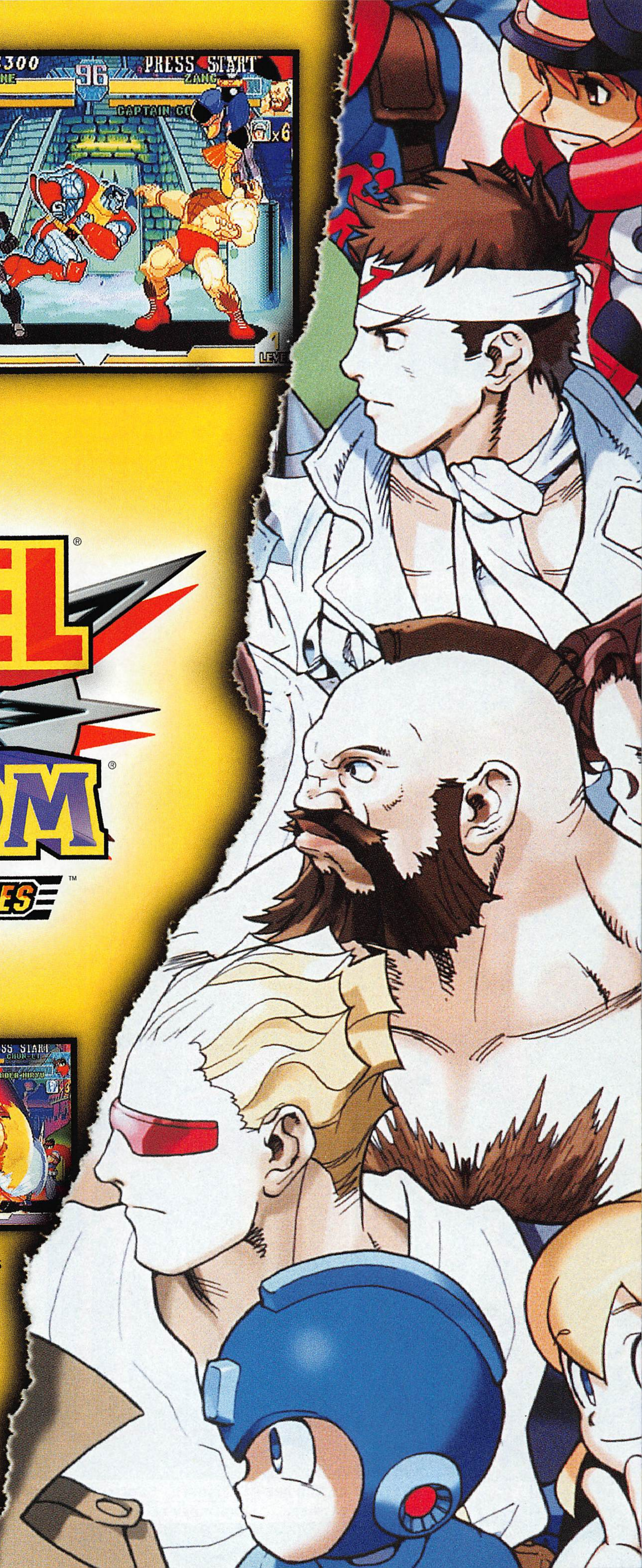

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Sega Dreamcast





Kain and Raziel return for an encore engagement on the poly-dripping Dreamcast. We scored a sneak peek at this sure-fire DC hit, and here's what we thought... Our time with the exclusive playable was limited, but more than adequate for us to realize what Eidos is trying to accomplish here. A week with *Soul Reaver* may not seem that brief, but prying the controller away from these rabid gamers was a feat in and of itself...

I can already hear the detractors mumbling "I don't wanna play the PC version on my DC!" Harsh words from people who have yet to play the game. Sounds like *FFVIII* syndrome all over again—passing judgment on a game before playing it.

At this time, *Soul Reaver* for the DC is nothing more than the PlayStation game on amphetamines and a six-pack of Red Bull. Even with a hi-res mode and a boosted 60 frames per second with artificial draw-in, *Soul Reaver* for the DC still screams like a turbo-charged, V8 beast. When I say fast, I mean SuperSonic-at-the-**real**-end-of-*Sonic-Adventure* fast. Teleporting from the Material Plane to the Spectral Plane and back takes less than a second. In fact, the increased speed lessened the grandeur of this revolutionary effect. Eidos has assured us that the game will use a speed limiter to keep the pace down to playable standards.

Draw-in is an oddity on the DC. It's a given that the DC has more polygon-pushing power than anything out there right now. That gargantuan Hitachi processor gives the DC the power to avoid using fog. But the *Kain* team plans to add 'hand-drawn,' volumetric fog. Whatever fog is added will look much more believable and should add to the mood of the game. We've been told that the fog will have the same rolling-patch effect that real fog does on highways. Right now, *Soul Reaver* uses artificial draw-in to limit what the player sees. What fun is it if the suspense is broken?



Expect nearly everything in the DC version to see some improvement over its PS sibling—including lighting, water, and other effects. Memory-consuming special effects that caused the PlayStation to chug or that weren't implemented in the PC port will shine once again in *Soul Reaver* DC. Even in its present, steroid-pumped PlayStation-like state, *Soul Reaver* looks utterly fantastic. Fire and



LEGACY of KAIN
SOUL REAVER

PREVIEW	CERBERUS: RAZIEL, YOU ARE WORTHY—ERR, WORTHIER...	DEVELOPER - CRYSTAL DYNAMICS	1 PLAYER
		PUBLISHER - EIDOS	AVAILABLE 1ST QTR.



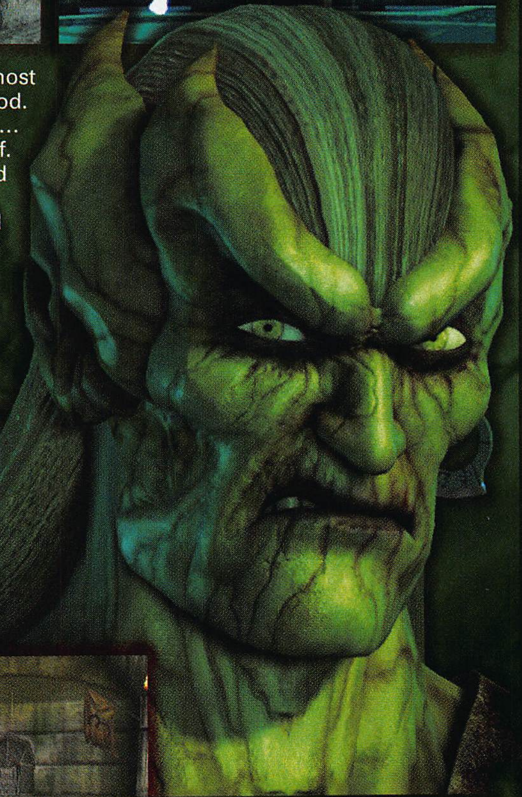




vampires burn with unheard of quality. Torches illuminating dark corridors are almost photo-realistic. Grab one off the wall and carry it around, and the effect is just as good. Water is equally impressive. Enter the Vortex that plays host to the Lake of the Dead... but I hope you're wearing your Depends, because you're going to wet yourself. Though not fully optimized yet, the Vortex never looked so amazing. Every nook and cubbyhole of this massive waterfall is easily viewable from the central platforms.

Structures at long last appear in the state that the Crystal D architects wanted them in. Each of the Pillars of Nosgoth can be seen as Raziel walks forward to meet his maker. Buildings and their inner workings won't change drastically. Sharper textures are guaranteed, but otherwise expect the same design. Organic areas are much more repulsive since the walls look like living, breathing flesh... Disgusting? Yes. Cool? Hell yeah!

What remains to be changed are the character models in the game. Raziel, Kain, and every other resident of Nosgoth are scheduled to undergo a 128-bit facelift. Raziel's original model shows the shortcomings of Sony's system when seen on DC hardware. I can't wait to see how he shapes up with a couple hundred more polys and a decent texture job. If the designers and artists on *Soul Reaver* are really smart, they'll add lip movement to each of the characters in the game's many cut-scenes. Think *Shen Mue* or *Soul Calibur* and imagine what the in-game cinematics could potentially be here...









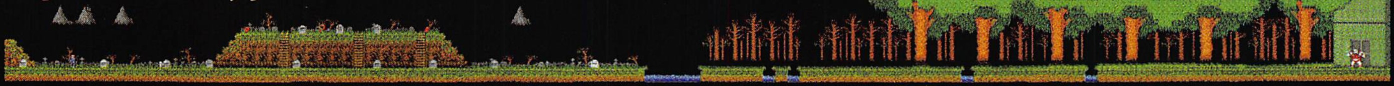
Players that hated the ending are going to hate it still. Eidos has no plans to advance the story. The contents may get a cleanup of sorts, but don't hold your breath for a rendered ending or a real ending for that matter. The rest of the story will apparently be advanced in *Soul Reaver's* sequel. Inconsistencies like why Turel has a tomb in the Serapham mausoleum, while appearing nowhere in the game, will remain. The glyphs will be as unimportant as before. This isn't a director's cut, but more like what Namco did with *Soul Calibur*—the same game with better visuals and more.

There's not many games that I want to play twice. Normally, I don't have the time nor the desire to blast through a game again. But I must play *Soul Reaver* again. If only for the ride, I want to see Nosgoth in all its newfound glory. I know what awaits at the end of the tunnel, but I'll close my eyes when I get there. C









Stage 1 Ghost 'N Goblins 1985

Six games and 15 years later, Arthur's as strong as can be. Who knows where he'd be if it weren't for MegaMan (just kidding). Capcom has no plans for a next-generation adventure for Arthur, but we can make do with games that aren't terribly difficult to find. Here's a list of Arthur spottings in the last decade and a half. In case anyone's interested, *Ghosts 'N Goblins*, *Ghouls 'N Ghosts* and *Super Ghouls 'N Ghosts* are available on the *Capcom Generation* series, *Volume 2*.

Aside from the games mentioned here, Arthur's also had a cameo in *Marvel Vs. Capcom* and a rarely-seen import puzzle game. Most recently, Arthur's been seen in *Makaimura* for Wonder Swan (*Makaimura* roughly translates as *Devil World Village*). Pretty much an original game, *Makaimura* combines everything seen in previous games into one black-and-white melting pot.

Original Ghost 'N Goblins Anthology







Old games are making a comeback of sorts; whether they're found in arcades that house older classics or emulators on PCs. For some of us, these old games remind us of old friends, places, or days gone by. The sad thing is that sometimes these games which we love so much have aged about as well as Kathleen Turner, Ted Danson, and Harrison Ford. Have you played any of your older favorites and seen how time has treated them? Sometimes not so well... I know this, and the team behind *RetroFX Ghosts 'N Goblins* does too.

Using proprietary coding technology (and a wee bit of Visual C and assembler), Dirk and his team have managed to more than faithfully recapture the heart and soul of *Ghosts 'N Goblins* without messing anything up. To put it bluntly, the game is identical; nothing has been changed—well, Arthur can turn around while crouching now, but that's it. Each stage has been adorned meticulously with enhanced visuals. Hopefully enough to attract and entertain the ADD-ridden Generation Y. Arthur, now a pre-rendered sprite, has never looked so good. Arthur's not the only character sporting new duds; everything from graveyard zombies to simple items and animations has been re-created perfectly. Not limited by sprites, tiles, animation, or anything else that bogged down old arcade games, *Ghosts 'N Goblins* has multiple layers of scrolling, true rendered animations, and more sound effects than you can shake a magic wand at. I tell ya, it's more than I can take in my old age. So what could make this a better game than it already is? Well, unfortunately, features like 2-player simultaneous gameplay and new levels and weapons would only compromise the authenticity of the *Ghosts 'N Goblins* experience. Maybe an original effort beyond this one is what ECM and everyone else would like. Wouldn't be a bad idea considering that this engine has enough muscle to sport little details like grass rustling in the wind, real-time lighting, transparencies, particle systems, and what not.

When do we see and play *Ghosts 'N Goblins* for our PC? That's still up in the air. If Capcom or any publisher for that matter has the foresight to nab this one, we could be in business before the upcoming E3. If not, *RetroFX Ghosts 'N Goblins* might forever remain a demo and proof that anything is possible. Wouldn't it be cool to see more old classics redone with some sweet eye-candy? Is that *Rabbit Punch* I hear? **C**

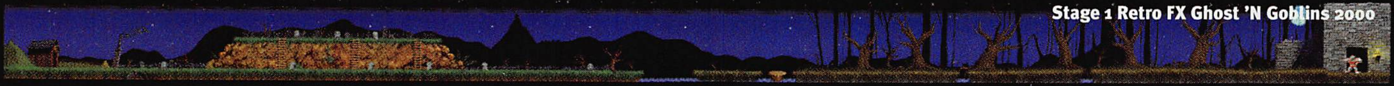
Retro FX Ghost 'N Goblins








PREVIEW	CERBERUS: Where's my RetroFX *Sidearms*?	Developer - RetroFX	1-2 Players
		Publisher - TBA?	Available TBA



GameFan Interviews RETRO FX

GameFan managed to track down Dirk Stevens, founder of RetroFX and lead programmer on *Retro FX Ghosts 'N Goblins*. Dirk and his team have been cranking away for nearly two years, adding new twists to Capcom's 1985 game, *Ghosts 'N Goblins*. Besides Dirk, the team consists of Rene 'Ray' Boutin (graphic artist), Anthony 'AntMan' Sisneros (graphic artist), Andre Boule (musician), Martin 'NightHawk' Freij (musician) and Ronnie 'Design' Viklund (graphic artist). This small team of old-school gamers wants to pay homage to a classic game and in the process rekindle the magic we once knew.



Dirk Stevens **Anthony Sisneros** **Rene "Ray" Boutin**

GF: Could you please give our readers some background?

Dirk Stevens: My name is Dirk Stevens. I got my start with the Commodore 64 and have been passionate about games ever since, programming demos and small games. Though I got a Computer Science degree, I learned most computer graphics and programming on my own with the C64 and Atari ST where I did tons of Assembler. Until recently I worked for a large software company in California where I did business software development. All my life I've been in multimedia and games programming more as a garage games developer, until recently. With RetroFX I want to go a lot further.

René Boutin: My name is René Boutin; my friends call me Ray. I come from Quebec, Canada. I studied graphic design for print media, but never applied it. Most of my background is in computer graphics for games or interactive media. Like Dirk, I started in my teens on the Commodore 64, and I progressed from there. The bulk of my game development experience is from 1990-96. I worked at Virgin Interactive as an artist and background animator on titles like *MC Kids* (NES), *Cool Spot* (Genesis), and *Robocop vs. Terminator*. Then I spent a couple of years at Sunsoft of America. I was a designer and producer on products like *Looney Tunes B-Ball*, Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*, and *Speedy Gonzales*.

GF: Obviously, both of you have been playing games for a very long time if you chose *Ghost 'N Goblins* to be your game. Why did you choose that, as opposed to something else?

DS: Well, *Ghosts 'N Goblins* was one of the games I played most in the arcade when I was about 16. It had me hooked from the first moment. The game concept was so cool and varied. It was revolutionary for me...so well balanced in difficulty and design. All my friends and I played it for nearly a year until finally almost mastering it. That's where my love for this game stems from. If I could mention one game in my life this would be it.

RB: The choice of the project is based on Dirk's decision. I was fond of *Ghost 'N Goblins*, but not in the sense that Dirk is. I remember playing it in the arcade and it was a little too hard for me. I was really into Capcom games in the mid-'80s like *Black Tiger*, *Commando*, but I really became a *Ghosts 'N Goblins* fan when it came out for the SNES. I also had the Commodore 64 version <laughs> and played it to death.

GF: Did you want to change anything you didn't like about the original?

DS: We tried to adhere very closely to the first one. There is only one minor change from the original. Back in the '80s in some of the Capcom games you couldn't turn around while crouching. Now you can, and that's the only thing we changed in gameplay. We have a lot of ideas on adding cool extras to the game and a number of them already made it into the game. An example would be having all kinds of different zombie types instead of just one (e.g., a more deformed zombie or a different colored zombie). Right now they are all the same. Rather than being stuck with generic global effects, like one death animation for all sprites, we can improve the game. Like if you shoot a zombie with fire he burns, or if Arthur falls in water he drowns. More improving the effects and look but not really changing the feel of the game.

GF: So why didn't you go to 3D?

DS: Some people have asked us that. It wouldn't be the original anymore. It'd be a different game. That's why we went for high end 2D (ECM's Note: glad I'm not alone...).

GF: How far along is the game?

DS: Given that we find a publisher, we can finish this in three months. The game and effects engine is all finished and ready. It's a matter of getting all the graphics done. Music is done for a large portion of the game. Our musicians Martin Freij and Andre Boule really tried hard to keep the style found in the older tunes, and just revamp it.

GF: How long has it been in the works?

DS: The project started a little less than 18 months ago. It started at a time when classic gaming began to pick up. I started playing *Ghosts 'N Goblins* again. The moment that I played *Ghosts 'N Goblins* again, I was disappointed with the blocky graphics. It's like the nostalgic mind improves old graphics, until you play them again. I created something called EAGLE to enhance older games. What it does is double pixels and smoothen graphics. It made my *Ghosts 'N Goblins* experience a little better. Our team got in touch because we all loved older games. Originally, we were going to replace the graphics (that's where we started), but in less than two weeks the project exploded—we wanted to improve everything. We would do a music engine, and an effects engine. We've been working on and off for a year and a half in our spare time. The first screenshot was taken less than a month and a half into the project. We had another artist, but he was a copycat ripping stuff straight from CPS games. It was a setback for us because we had to redo his graphics.

GF: Has it been more challenging than you originally anticipated?

DS: Everything went relatively smooth; some things are harder than others. The real-time fire took a bit longer. The way I go at code is that I build a basic effect and then Ray provides feedback on it. That kind of interaction seems to work really well, he's great on giving feedback, and on a technical level he knows what he wants.

GF: So where do you see your team a year from now?

DS: Best case scenario for *Ghosts 'N Goblins* is that it's out on the PC and in the works for a higher end console. Like Ray said, there are some other games that scream for the RetroFX treatment, like *Bionic Commando*, maybe *Commando*, and also *SideArms*. Going further with RetroFX is important—it'd be a real waste not to go further. If a publisher would approach us and told us to go nuts, we will give him something spectacular. As it is now, *RetroFX Ghosts 'N Goblins* was made to run on a Pentium 200. If any of your readers are interested in learning even more about our games, they can visit our website: **http://www.retrofx.com**

GameFan would like to thank the team at RetroFX as well as wish them the best of luck. Watch these pages for any new RetroFX info.


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85
WrestleMania I
World Wrestling Federation® ushers in a new age of wrestling popularity
86
WrestleMania 2
The first WrestleMania battle royal
87
WrestleMania III
Breaks live attendance records with a capacity crowd
88
WrestleMania IV
Plays host toothe first WrestleMania Heavy weight title tournament
89
WrestleMania V
Shawn Michaels' WrestleMania debut as a member of The Rockers™
90
WrestleMania VI
The tide turns as both Mega Powers lose in the same night
91
WrestleMania VII
The Undertaker scores a decisive victory in his WrestleMania debut
92
WrestleMania VIII
Shawn Michaels and the Undertaker continue their rise to the top with wins
93
WrestleMania IX
Federation Championship changes hands twice in one night
94
WrestleMania X
Shawn Michaels and Razor Ramon wrestle for the IC Strap in an original hardcore classic
95
WrestleMania XI
X-Pac™ and Road Dogg™ make their WrestleMania debuts as ringside support for Jeff Jarrett™ and Razor Ramon™
96
WrestleMania XII
Heartbreak Kid Shawn Michaels wins a 60 minute Iron Man match for the title
97
WrestleMania 13
The Undertaker® begins his second Federation Championship reign with a main event victory
WrestleMania XIV
In an epic contest, Stone Cold Steve Austin becomes World Champion with a win over Shawn Michaels
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STEVE AUSTIN
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GAMEFAN PRESENTS
OUR EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH



YOSHITAKA AMANO

THIS IMAGE IS THE COVER FOR AMANO'S NEWEST ARTBOOK, *BITEN* (PRONOUNCED "BEE-TEN"), WHICH CAN BE PURCHASED FROM MR. AMANO'S WEBSITE: HTTP://WWW.AMANOSWORLD.COM. WE GOT OURS FOR FREE... HA!



YOSHITAKA AMANO AND SANDMAN GOD NEIL GAIMAN

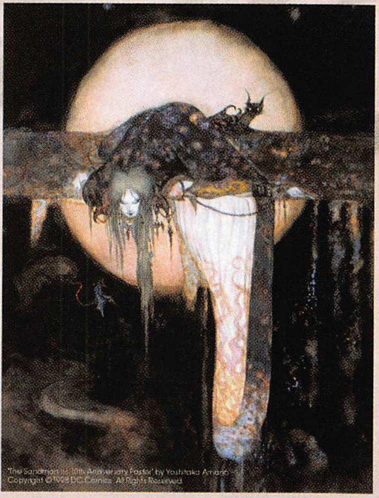


1001 SUITS MARVELLING OVER 1001 NIGHTS

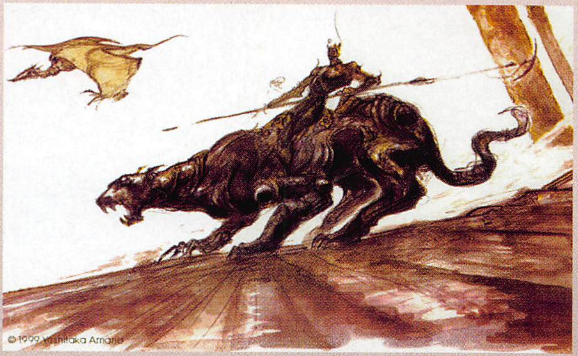
Yoshitaka Amano is one of the most famous artists in our industry. Known primarily as the character designer for the role-playing games, *Final Fantasy IV-VI*, Amano's game credits also include character designs for Atlus' *Kartia*. His vast portfolio extends to the realm of anime, where just a few of his works include *G-Force* (*Battle of the Planets*), *Vampire Hunter D*, and the cult-classic *Angel's Egg*. Amano was also involved in the creation of *1001 Nights*, a collaboration with composer David Newman and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, in which Amano's images were animated into a CG movie and screened before a live audience to the accompaniment of a real orchestra. Recently, he illustrated the graphic novel *The Sandman: The Dream Hunters*, which he worked on with writer Neil Gaiman.

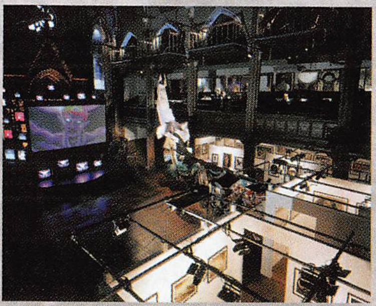
This past October, Amano opened an exhibit in New York at the Angel Orensenz Foundation to reveal his newest character, HERO. Amano describes HERO as "a legend of the future... a tale of the quest for love and a search that takes him 10,000 years into the future and through many universes."

The press release explains it better. "HERO is a man who falls in love in the twentieth century. He is reborn as a prince 10,000 years and many lifetimes later. This prince has an insatiable yearning for someone he loved in his distant past, without whom he is doomed to immortality. Accompanied by his mighty cyborg companion, he embarks upon a quest to find this lost love." Eggo was on hand to check out the exhibit, which also featured drawings from *The Sandman: The Dream Hunters*, video of the CG in *Final Fantasy Anthology*, ceramics, kimonos, and a special screening of *1001 Nights*. But best of all, we got a chance to speak with The Man himself...



10TH ANNIVERSARY SANDMAN POSTER





The showroom featured paintings, ceramics, kimonos, and a large screen showing 1001 Nights.

GF: What were some of the inspirations for your artwork? Your influences?
YA: If there's an original story... if I'm painting a drawing or something based on an original story... I first read it of course, and then I interpret it visually. And if it's an original work, I work rather chaotically, but at the end of the process I think there's always a thematic link between everything I output.

GF: What kind of materials, paints, or objects do you use to create your artwork?
YA: For the monochrome stuff, I used pen and ink and Indian ink. And I also used ceramics for the very first time. Also [I've used] a silk kimono, which I rendered stuff on. All I care about is... as long as there's colors, I have fun.

GF: You've done so much artwork over all this time. How long does it take you to do one piece?
YA: I work fast. For example, those gold panels over there, I did nine in one day.

GF: Wow!
YA: It takes me a while to start, but when I do, I think I'm one of the faster artists.

GF: Definitely. It's been rumored that you're working on games for PlayStation 2 and Dreamcast. I'm wondering if you can tell me anything about that.
YA: It's a secret, but yes I am doing something.

GF: Can you give me any details?
YA: There are people involved here. Do you want me to introduce you? There's a person from Capcom here today wandering around [ed's note: that person was Yoshiki Okamoto, interviewed last issue]. You should ask him.

GF: Do you get the chance to play video games yourself?
YA: No, I play very little.

GF: What is it about New York that makes you want to work here?
YA: I've always had the desire to come here to create work and to present work. I think there are many people around the world who have the same feelings about New York.

GF: What type of work atmosphere do you work in?
YA: I lock myself in a room, and solitude is important.

GF: What kind of music do you listen to?
YA: When there are other people around, I like to listen to jazz, classical, and 'cool' music. And then when people go away, I like to listen to folk music and other dumb things, but I only listen to that in real solitude.

GF: Are you doing anything for the Final Fantasy movie?
YA: No.

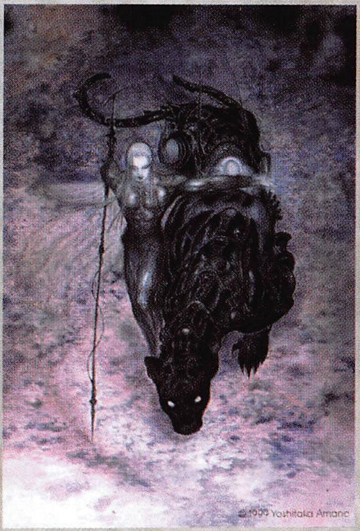
GF: Would you ever consider doing a feature movie of your characters like the CG intros to Final Fantasy Collection?
YA: I want to do that with HERO. Of course I can't do that alone. I want to work with many people to create a film like that.



Hero on display for the first time.

GF: Are there any other people like Neil Gaiman who you'd like to work with?
YA: Well I'm not sure about other collaborators, but basically I've always started with works which have an original story, and in the future I want to start working with digitals first, and then do the story after that. Well, the way I'm working right now is to just begin working... without really thinking about what the whole structure is... and then to eventually find the structure within the work... which is a process which takes a lot of time, and that is what I do.





GF: HERO is a lifetime accomplishment that you've wanted to do for a while. Is there anything else you'd like to accomplish in your career?
YA: This is probably the biggest multimedia project that I'm working on. And then maybe after HERO, I would like to focus on each medium. For example, maybe ceramics... I'd like to do a lot more of those. And also the kimono-style, I would probably want to continue working in that medium too. And then perhaps I would like to work on poetry—visualizing poetry—something I'm interested in... I also want to visualize Salome. These are just some of the things I'm interested in.

GF: Why didn't you do the character design for Final Fantasy VII and VIII?
YA: I'm on the receptive side. I either get an offer or I don't. I really don't know why I didn't do that. I'm not an employee of Squaresoft.

GF: Who would win in a fight, you or Tetsuya Nomura?
YA: Who is Tetsuya Nomura?

GF: The character designer for [Final Fantasy] VII and VIII.
YA: You mean a fight? Fist fight?

GF: Yeah.
YA: I haven't slept for several nights so if I fought him now, I would probably lose. It's not a fair time to do it.

We'd like to thank Mr. Amano for taking the time to do this interview, because in that same span of time, he could've easily whipped out two sketches worth a million dollars apiece. If you'd like to read more about him, or his teaming up with Neil Gaiman, visit Mr. Amano's website at http://www.amanosworld.com. GameFan would also like to thank John Martyr, Ann Yamamoto, Jackie Becher, and Maya Shioya for making this all possible.

天野喜孝画集











I used to hate kids' games. Most of the time they suffered from really bad graphics, lame themes, and—unless they were developed by Shigeru Miyamoto or Yuji Naka—tended to be... well, boring. Sony's *Spyro the Dragon* helped redefine the look and feel of titles for a younger audience, and GTI's upcoming *40 Winks* drives the point home: Kids' games can rock!

OK, so the game starts out with an impressive opener and the character design is too cute for its own good. I'm a 23-year-old gamer—why do I want to play a kids' game? Like any *Mario* game, *40 Winks* has that certain user-friendly gameplay that makes it a snap to get into. All the characters (even NiteKap, the antagonist) have very likable qualities. For example, NiteKap's sidekick is a harmless-looking teddy bear—hard to hate a guy with Snuggles at his side.

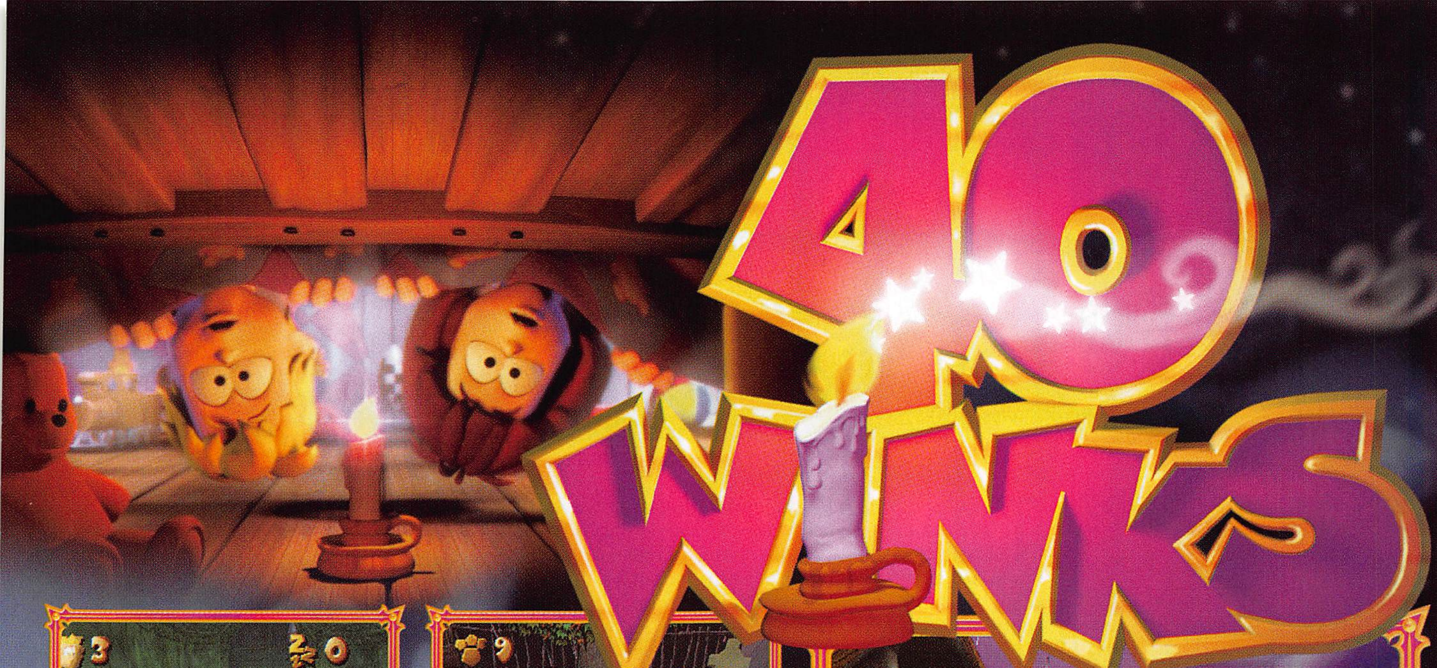
So which tower is the princess trapped in now? Time and time again her whereabouts are the focal point of this type of game. Thankfully, *40 Winks* attempts to be clever and different.

All is safe and pleasant in the dream world. Elliot and his sister Claris—I mean Ruff and his sister Tumble—are innocent kids just trying to get a bit of shuteye. However, one bedtime story in particular doesn't sit well with these little tykes. An evil sandman known as NiteKap is bent on capturing all the Winks (which inspire good dreams) and replacing them with nightmares. Entering the dream world, you take control of either sibling, and the goal is to return the Winks to their rightful owners. While the task may seem easy at first, expect an array of hostile forces, such as giant Moon Mice and Frankensteins, to stand in your way.

Each of *40 Winks'* six worlds (Castle, Space, Pirate, etc.) has been injected with loads of personality, and the eerie mood the designers crafted fits the horror/nightmare theme perfectly. Levels are fairly straightforward with minimal exploration. Instead, you've got lots of switch-pulling and item-collecting, namely cogs. Each















locked door requires a certain amount of cogs to pass, so the majority of the game plays out like this: unlock door, collect cogs and power-ups, repeat... (rinse if necessary).

"When I was a kid... (in my best cranky old man's voice) we didn't have colorful graphics like these." Whether you're into kids' games or not, you have to appreciate the fact that *40 Winks* is a great-looking game. An impressive CG intro (I'm sensing a *40 Winks* cartoon) combined with a solid 3D engine leads me to believe that *40 Winks* will appeal to a variety of audiences.

Scattered about the levels are jack-in-the-boxes that allow players to change for a short period into various creatures. From a knuckle-dragging Neanderthal to a *NiGHTS*-inspired court jester or a sword-wielding ninja, these brief costume changes are definitely an awesome feature. Unfortunately, character attributes vary little from character to character, so there's no real need—such as greater strength—to transform, but it sure looks cool. Ruff and Tumble appear just as strong and able as the ninja, caveman, etc.

Granted, *40 Winks* won't appeal to an older, *Metal Gear*-loving crowd, but for kids and the young at heart, GTI has a real treat in store this January. Move over *Rugrats* and Elmo (preferably to another country!), the kids have demanded more for their buck, and *40 Winks* is the result.

Fury suffered from horrible nightmares as a child: "Noooo!! My savings account, where did all the money go?"









Viewpoint Score :85	Developer - Eurocom	1 Player	Fury: Break out
	Publisher - GT Interactive	Available January	the melatonin.

R REVIEW

MEDAL OF HONOR™









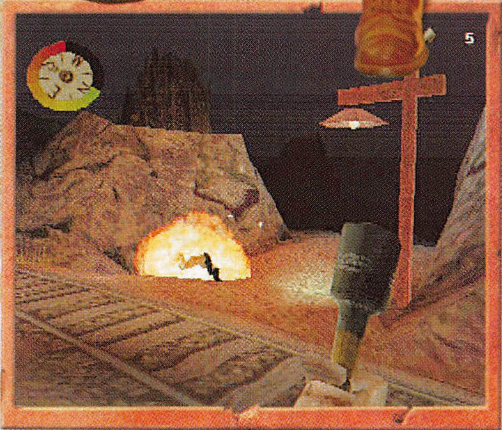
There are two political and religious groups that anyone can poke fun at without getting any heat, Nazis and devil worshippers. Leave it to Steven Spielberg to come up with a game about killing Adolph's army. In the process, his talent pool has 'borrowed' <cough> virtually everything that made *GoldenEye* the hit it is today. El Niño and I concur that *Medal of Honor's* premise is much more enticing than James Bond's—who doesn't wanna take a potshot at a red armband marked with the swastika?

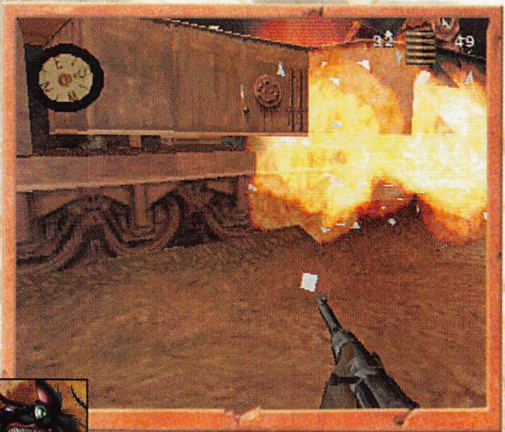
Premise aside, what makes *Medal of Honor* a game worthy of notice is, well, in a word: everything. Picture this: Your first mission has you sneaking through a Nazi-filled forest—certain death for those lacking ninja gamer skills. Checking your inventory, you see a couple of hand grenades. Hey, look there—a bunch of friendly Nazis. Why not toss 'em a grenade? Don't be too shocked when one of the Germans reluctantly runs toward the live grenade and tosses it back, shouting something like "Verzeihung, aber sie haben ihre granate vergessen" (Deutsch for "Excuse me, but you forgot your grenade"). On a different occasion, I shot an unsuspecting German soldier; somehow his trigger finger locked and he went down shooting. Another mission has you posing as a German officer, Indiana Jones-style. After some guards ask for your papers, walk behind them and they'll occasionally look over their shoulder to make sure you're not pulling any funny business.

Like its primary influence, *Medal of Honor* has objective-based missions. You may have to 'borrow' some papers from a Nazi officer to get into a room where you must flip a train switch. *Medal of Honor* also controls a lot like *GoldenEye*. The control is very good; the jumping could be better, but overall control is tight. As a PC player, first person shooters don't do it for me on consoles. Not often will you find me playing a grandchild of *Doom* on the PlayStation or N64, but *Medal of Honor* is too good to ignore. The World War II theme pulls you in hard and the refined gameplay keeps you wanting more, wanting to see what's next. A rating system ensures that you can replay the game knowing that maybe you'll get those four stars.

Chalk it up to beginner's luck, pass it off as a fluke, but someone did something right, very right. Maybe, just maybe, these guys know what they're doing because *Medal of Honor* has too much going for it to be luck. Good looks, a movie-quality soundtrack and effects, Dale Dye consulting soldier—George C. Scott would be proud.

Cerberus can't think of a cool end line. He's pretty sure Reubus will save his ass with something witty. (Reubus's note: Not this time, Blue-hair)





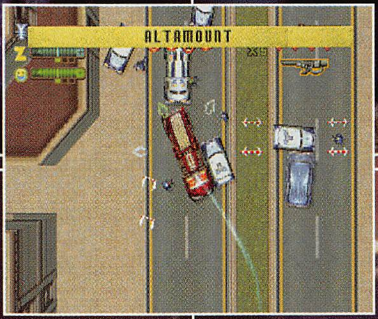


R REVIEW	CERBERUS: PREPARE FOR YOUR FINEST HOUR.	DEVELOPER - DREAMWORKS PUBLISHER - ELECTRONIC ARTS	1-2 PLAYERS AVAILABLE NOW	VIEWPOINT SCORE: 90

GTA2









Coming up on a busy intersection, your car comes to a complete stop. To your right, there's a scruffy-looking man crossing the street, but you pay him no heed as your gaze returns to the road. The man approaches your car and aims a Glock at your face. Outside the car, you hear him yelling at you to open the door. You can't floor it—the cross traffic won't let you go—so, fearing for your life, you slowly open the door. Before you can open it all the way, he grabs you by the collar and slams you to the ground, speeding off in your S2000. Welcome to the world of *GTA2*.

If you read the preview, you know that DMA has nearly eliminated an ailment known in medical circles as Game-us Monotonous. This terminal illness has been brought under control with booster shots of good game design. Thugs are kept busier than a swarm of killer bees with a ton of missions—anything from blowing up police cars to offing a weasel. Three rival gangs will respect you or despise you depending on where the dice fall. I normally side with the Zaibatsu, they're easy to please. Knock off a couple of Hare Krishnas and they're a thug's best friend.

RESPECT IS EVERYTHING

An important part of having fun with *GTA2* is understanding the nature of this beast. Like the Dangonator (a.k.a. Dangohead), I live for a good arcade-style, adrenaline-pumping, fast-paced, guntotin' killathon. *GTA2* is an arcade gamer's dream come true.

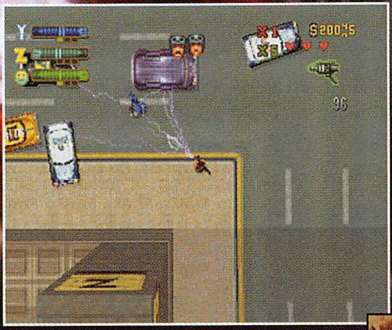
No deeper than the shallow depths of E. Storm's mind, *GTA2* will entertain, but not like a *Monster Rancher 2* or *Carnage Heart*. If you press the 'power' button on the PlayStation and expect anything more than *GTA2*, then you'd better press that button one more time. There's no graphical pyrotechnics to lessen the blow, it's all bare bones PlayStation. Compared to its PC brother, *GTA2* on the PlayStation looks like a redheaded stepchild. There's no lightsourcing fanfare, but there are some nice explosions. A city map would have been helpful, but sorry, you're on your own. Learning the ins and outs of the city will undoubtedly be part of the fun. Before you know it, you'll be taking that annoying SWAT van on a wild goose chase as you make your getaway.

To put it bluntly: You're going to love or hate *GTA2*. Clichés have never meant much, but if you liked the first then come and play. Hated *GTA*? You'd better find another way of venting your pent-up frustrations.

Cerberus has learned to enjoy his two-hour commute by regularly practicing road rage.







Viewpoint Score: 86	Developer - DMA Design	1 Player	Cerberus: We can
	Publisher - Rockstar	Available Now	work together, Kosai.

Review

PlayStation

Some things are never meant to be. *Thrill Kill* is one... and a Dreamcast port of *Tekken Tag Tournament* is another [ECM's note: thank goodness!]. After acquiring Virgin Interactive, EA wiped the slate clean. Part of that cleansing process was cutting a four-player fighting game known as *Thrill Kill*. Well, Activision has a little something to offer you conformists by way of *Wu-Tang Shaolin Style*.

There's not a person alive who's not going to compare *Wu-Tang* to its daddy, *Thrill Kill*. So where does it stand in the world of sad and successful sequels? Okay, it's not officially a sequel, but for the most part, it is (sorry Shidoshi, no thong-wearing gimps on stilts here). The same game engine drives every polygon, and most of the design team is intact, with maybe a 'Tragic' change here and there. What's different is the character design, story, music and hub system. Specific missions and enemies must be fought to open the Inner Sanctum, which is done through the use of a hub system. The raunchy humor and shock factor of *TK* is gone, replaced by rap-fu and effects lifted from the movie *The Matrix*.

The biggest problem with *Wu-Tang* is that it's based on a game that was primarily a gimmick to begin with. This game ups the gimmick factor by adding the Wu-Tang clan and its music. In fact, *WT:SS* shouldn't be listed under fighting game—it's a gimmick game! Another problem is that the character models are all the same. Remove a weapon here, add a new hat or outfit there, and viola! A new character! Adding insult to injury are the models. At this time in the PlayStation's lifespan, no one should be coding anything but single-skinned models. What this means is that the characters have visible polygon priority issues at the seams. Look at RZA or other characters as they walk; see the polys drop in and out near their hips? Naughty Paradox... At least the characters in *Thrill Kill* differed in size and proportions.

I've dogged on *Wu-Tang*, but it does have its strong points. Control is tight and very responsive, but that detestable crouch button has got to hit the road. Game speed is nearly twice that of *TK*, which is a plus. The combo system is contrived, but it's a lot of fun to find those combos which Ben and Ben created. *Wu-Tang's* story is original and good enough to grace the pages of a comic or even a *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*-style movie. The story—told through nifty rendered cinematics—is what kept me playing until I found all 36 of those damn chambers.

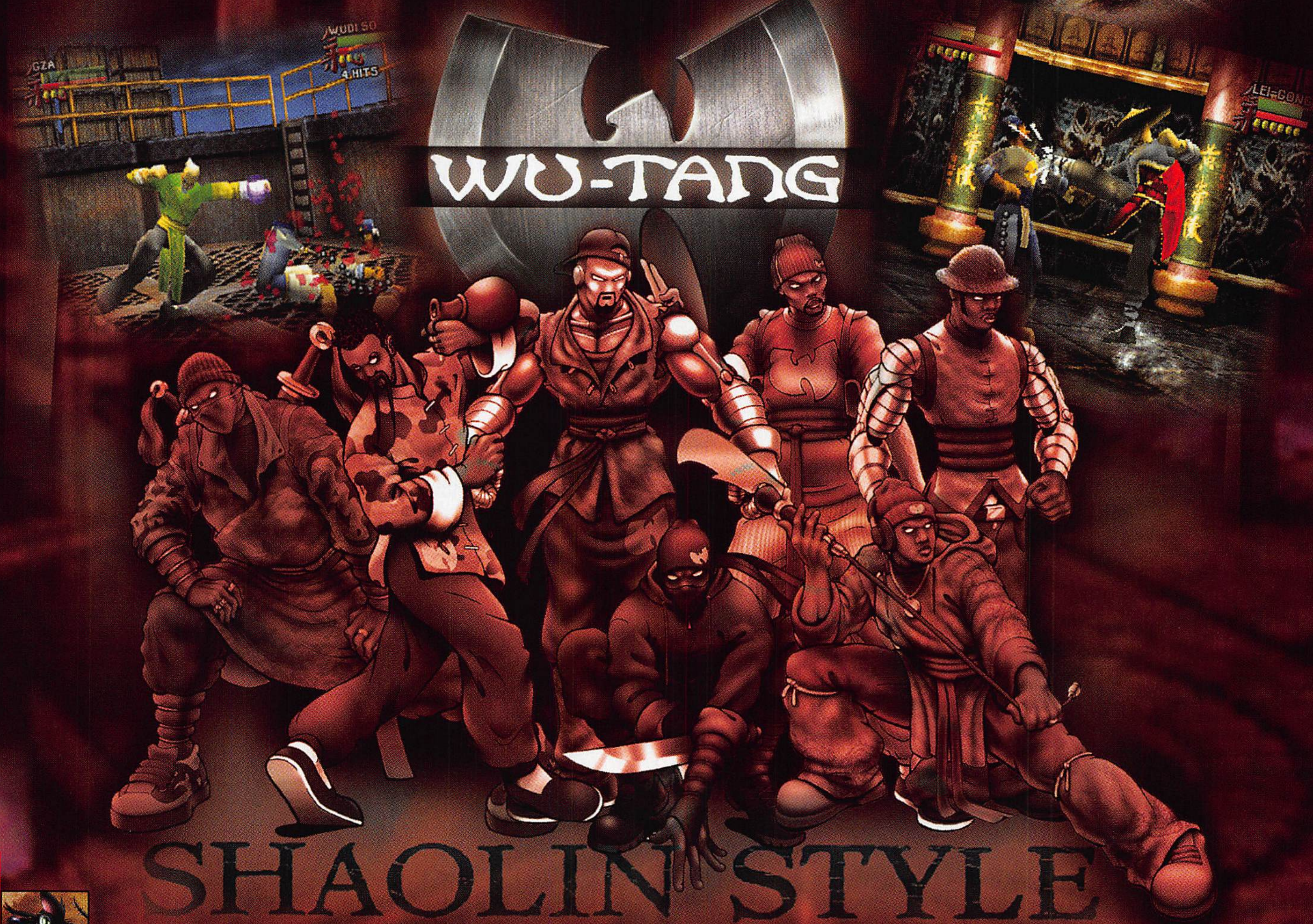
<Beginning in hushed whispers and escalating to loud demonic sounds> *"Thrill Kill, Thrill Kill, Thrill Kill, Thrill Kill..."* That's all I can hear when I 'play' *Wu-Tang*. Too bad it's not what I'm really playing. The shock factor isn't there, and that's where the interest lies. You see, *Thrill Kill* is like that really cool Voltron toy you always wanted as a kid. It had already been discontinued by the time you saved enough money for it, so the only thing you could do was buy Voltron II. That's what *Wu-Tang* is, a copy of a really good thing. Take it as you will...

Cerberus wants the clan to make a licensed citrus drink called Wu-Tang... (the silence is deafening)









R REVIEW	CERBERUS: WHERE'S BELLADONNA AND MARUKA?	DEVELOPER - PARADOX PUBLISHER - ACTIVISION	1-4 PLAYERS AVAILABLE NOW	VIEWPOINT SCORE: 78





READY 2 RUMBLE BOXING

I haven't boxed since high school. Our Physical Education consisted of various sports, among them pugilism. It wasn't a very pleasant experience—not when I was on the receiving end of the leather. The idea of an organized sport that requires that contestants knock each other senseless is just brutal. Sure makes for a great game though, doesn't it? Too bad no one's been able to get it right. Nintendo's *Punch-Out!!!* series had a certain charm that glued me to my SNES, and *Final Round* by Konami was a ton of fun, but it never made the trip home.

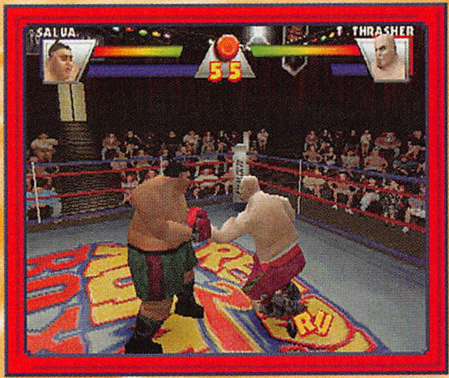
And then there's the PlayStation... Quite a successful console, full of hits in practically every genre—fighting, RPGs, adventure, puzzle, racing... <trips and falls> oh, and then there's boxing. *Knockout Kings* and *Contender!*—just what I want, a slug's pace slugfest and a marionette battle! Enter *Ready 2 Rumble* for PlayStation. Midway's already made tsunami-sized waves with *Ready 2 Rumble* on the Dreamcast and now comes out of the corner punching with round two on the PlayStation. No introduction is necessary if you've been following us for the past few months.

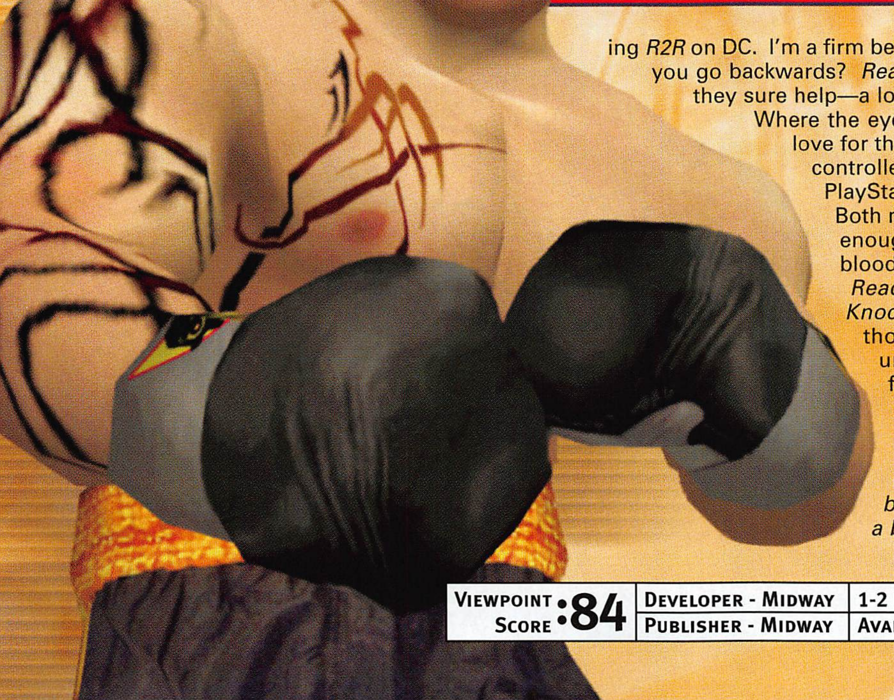


Let's face it, graphically speaking, the PlayStation can't hold a candle to the Dreamcast. But for what it is, *Ready 2 Rumble* on the PlayStation looks as good as it can. Models are impressive for PlayStation; the animation is smooth, for PlayStation; the game is impressive, for PlayStation. That's what I kept telling myself. It's hard to go back after playing *R2R* on DC. I'm a firm believer that graphics don't make the game, but how do you go backwards? *Ready 2 Rumble* isn't about stunning visuals, but damn, they sure help—a lot.









Where the eye candy goes sour, the control is cranked up. Call it love for the PlayStation or simply being used to the Dual Shock controller, but I felt more at home with *Ready 2 Rumble* on PlayStation than on that 128-bit big daddy we like so much. Both movement and attacks are just a tiny bit better. That's enough for me to notice, and I think it'll be enough for your bloodhound senses to detect.

Ready 2 Rumble falls somewhere between the realistic *Knockout Kings* and the cartoony world of *Contender*, though it still trounces them both and stands as the undefeated boxing champ for PlayStation. The fun factor (ugh, I hate that term) skyrockets when you grab a couple of friends and some Guinness. Better pick up the phone and pull out the chilled mugs...

Cerberus is still waiting for some 'smart' developer to blatantly rip off the Tobal 2 engine for use in a boxing game.



Viewpoint Score :84	Developer - Midway	1-2 Players	Cerberus: Let's get	Review
	Publisher - Midway	Available Now	ready to... aw, forget it.	

PlayStation



"At Last... a Medie


val Tomb Raider..."
-Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine

"After reaching legendary status on the PC, the Might and Magic universe is ready to cast its spell on the PlayStation."

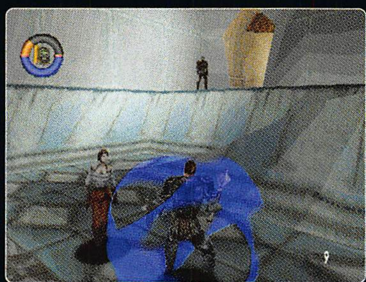
-GamePro

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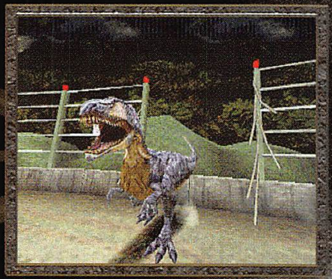


Note: Normally, we wouldn't cover a 'game' like *Jurassic Park: Warpath* because it's not worth it, but we feel this review is necessary as a public service announcement to the unsuspecting populace.



There I was, strapped in a chair, with no way to escape... from the seventh layer of gaming hell—the licensing zone! There would be no escape... Standing before me was a giant, red demon with curled black horns bearing a faint resemblance to Tim Curry. The walls shook as he spoke—"PICK your poison." Pausing in my struggles, I turned in the direction he beckoned, eyes widening in horror at the sight... There, in the corner of the room, lay three illuminated television screens, their contents recognizable right away: legendary games which parents used to scare little kids who'd been bad... *Star Wars Masters of Teras Kasi*, *Superman 64*, and... you guessed it, *Jurassic Park: Warpath*. "NOOOOOOOOO!!!!"—my cry echoed through the night until I finally woke—a cold, quivering mess. <shiver> What a nightmare!

Bad games are destined to be one of two things: coasters or best-sellers. The coasters are the *Criticoms*, *Bio Freaks*, and *Deadly Arts* of the world—games so bad that the programmers themselves shake their heads when you mention their blasphemous names. Rulers of the bargain bin, coasters have no redeeming qualities. But there's another breed of bad game out there, something much more insidious... licensed games. Nearly everyone's fallen victim to this before. Look! A new *Star Wars* game! Flip over the box, and... "Wow! Those screenshots are amazing!" By the time the clerk hands you the receipt, it's already too late... blinded by the pretty pictures, you shake your fist impotently at George Lucas.





Warpath is the epitome of a license-driven game. A flashy, attention-getting box image, complete with dazzling screenshots, a high-profile *Jurassic Park* logo, and most likely a quote from *Newsweek* like, "adrenaline-pumping, dinosaur-shredding action lives on your PlayStation!" This, combined with well-meaning but ignorant parents, is what leads to travesties like *Superman 64* selling well. It's my job to warn you that we've got a stinker on our hands here; stay as far away from this as you would a T-Rex havin' a real bad day.

The graphics... are wonderful. You'll not find a bad-looking screenshot of this game. The game engine is solid through and through, dinosaur models are amazing, and backgrounds are semi-interactive (think electrified fences). Aurally, it's a treat as well—lots of beastly roars, ground-rumbling thuds, and medieval war cries. Plus, the occasional music is performed by a real-life orchestra.

But beyond the candy-coated exterior that's as good as marketing gold, lies a cold, dark interior—a hollow shell that makes very little attempt at being a fighting game. Moves are sluggish to come out, and trying to combo is as futile as challenging ECM at a game of *Bomberman*. There are no cool special moves (which *Primal Rage* had), so you're left with an arsenal of normal attacks that'll leave you weeping like Fury when he heard about *Shen Mue's* delay. The enemy AI is shockingly realistic... computer-controlled dinosaurs that are as smart as real-life dinos! It's so poor that you can finish the game by mashing one button to the bitter end! Lastly, the nail in the coffin—the straw that broke the camel's back—is the gameplay design was developed by... <drum roll please> our very own Cerberus! How's that for a Kiss of Death?





Eggo prays to all that's holy that we never Trespass down this path again...



REVIEW — EGGO: LOOK OUT! EGGO'S ON THE WARPATH!	DEVELOPER - BLACK OPS PUBLISHER - ELECTRONIC ARTS	1-2 PLAYERS AVAILABLE NOW	VIEWPOINT SCORE: 43





Those crazy marketing peeps have a way of changing a product to better suit their audience. What is pink for women (or Shidoshi) is blue for men; what is fanciful for the ladies is sleek for the gents. *Bust A Move* (or *Puzzle Bobble* if you're Japanese) is a woman's game. No offense, but I've seen more females play *Bust A Move* in the last couple of years than any other game before or after. Its ultra-cute graphics and characters draw our significant others in, while the gameplay keeps them there. *Puzzle Bobble's* squeaky-clean look kept me away from playing more than I liked. Gameplay was solid in *Puzzle Bobble*, though some of the randomness I could have done without. *Ballistic* (which has little, if anything, in common with the TurboGrafx-16 game of the same name) is a man's *Puzzle Bobble*.

Yeah, yeah, tell me I sound chauvinistic, but I mean no harm. So about *Ballistic*... it's *Puzzle Bobble* with a splash of vodka. It's no-frills puzzling at its best; no little green dragons or cutesy witches to steal your attention away from the game.



Ballistic's gameplay is different enough from *Puzzle Bobble* for new and old players to check it out. Balls of various colors slowly, or not so-slowly, move closer to the center of a spiral not unlike the Dreamcast logo. Your position is smack dab in the center. As the balls close in on your location, you must connect at least three balls of the same color. This is fairly simple, but gets really hairy later on. Since the balls are in a single line, it's a lot easier to plan a huge combo in the dozen range. Some stages have balls moving in from multiple lines, forcing you to split your time between the two—Bubby and Bobby couldn't dream of keeping up here. Power-ups like bombs and clocks slow down the pace enough for you to catch your breath; they'll even help here and there to form some gigantic combos.

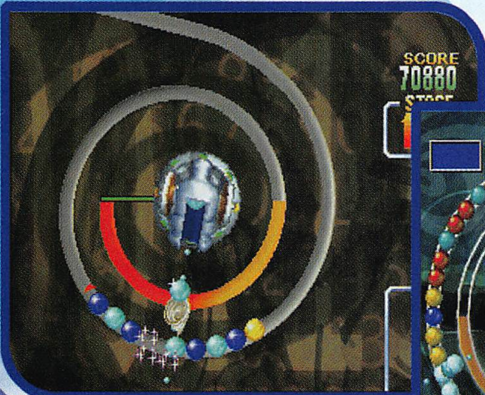
BREAK THE MOLD OF REPETITIVE PUZZLE GAMES . . .

BALLISTIC

Beating Fury senseless in 2-player mode still didn't convince me about *Ballistic*. It's not a bad game, but it only has three options: Panic, Stage, and Versus mode. Us spoiled Gen-X gamers demand more than three options, even from the best of games; not that *Ballistic's* stage won't keep you busy, but I want more—don't you? Is there just not enough here? *Ballistic* is a good, close-to-great puzzle game, but could I be in denial that I miss the adorable factor from the *Puzzle Bobble* games? Nah, I can't be, that's a woman's game...

Cerberus has never had a hard time juggling... with three heads they just pass 'em back and forth. Good doggie!







BUST-A-MOVE FOR MEN!

Viewpoint Score: 87	Developer - Mitchell	1-2 Players	Cerberus: Don't let blue balls get the best of you.
	Publisher - Infogrames	Available Now	

R REVIEW

PlayStation

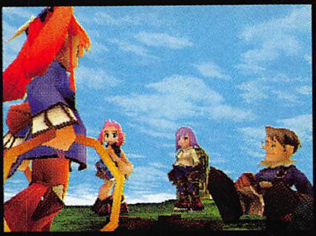
Can the creators that brought us Xenogears recapture the magic in their latest action RPG?



A few months back, we played a demo of this game in the Japanese *Seiken Densetsu: Legend of Mana*. Now, the full game is out in Japan, and many of the questions about *Dew Prism* can finally be answered...

Chances are, if you get into a sausage conversation with someone and the topic turns to *Dew Prism*, the other person will probably say, "That game looks awesome!" I can't tell you how many people wandered by and stopped to ask, "What game is that?" The engine's so unreal for a PlayStation game that more than one person has likened *Dew Prism's* graphics to a Dreamcast title! It's comparable, if not better than, *Climax Landers* visually — How crazy is that statement? But the point is people get so caught up in *DP's* visual presentation that they often forget to ask about the game.

Wanna know how it plays? Think *Brave Fencer Musashi* — an adventure game with platform elements... not a traditional RPG, which was probably what you were expecting from Square. On more than one occasion, you'll delve into the frightening realm of 3D platforming (Ack! Depth... perception... failing...). There are mild role-playing elements such as growing HP/MP bars, shiny new weapons/armor, and a serious story line, but you shouldn't consider this a flat-out RPG.







DEWPRISM
デュープリズム











The story follows either Rue or Mint. Rue's sister is killed by a mysterious stranger at the beginning, and he sets off in search of the magical Dew Prism to resurrect her. Princess Mint is a member of the royal family. Her younger sister is trying to usurp the throne from her, so Mint needs the Dew Prism to keep her sibling in check. Together, Rue and Mint embark on the same quest for the Prism, though each has their own quests to flesh out. Their paths crossover from time to time, so you'll see clever overlap between stories if you play both characters. This dual-character, intertwining storyline is similar to Sony's RPG *Star Ocean 2*.

As yet, there's still no U.S. release date for this game, other than the year 2000. We know we'll see this game, along with *Saga Frontier 2*, *Chrono Cross*, and *Legend of Mana* next year. Heck, I wouldn't be surprised if Square EA pulls out all the stops and delivers *Parasite Eve 2* as well. The new millennium looks very promising for Square fans right now... and don't even get me started on PlayStation 2! E

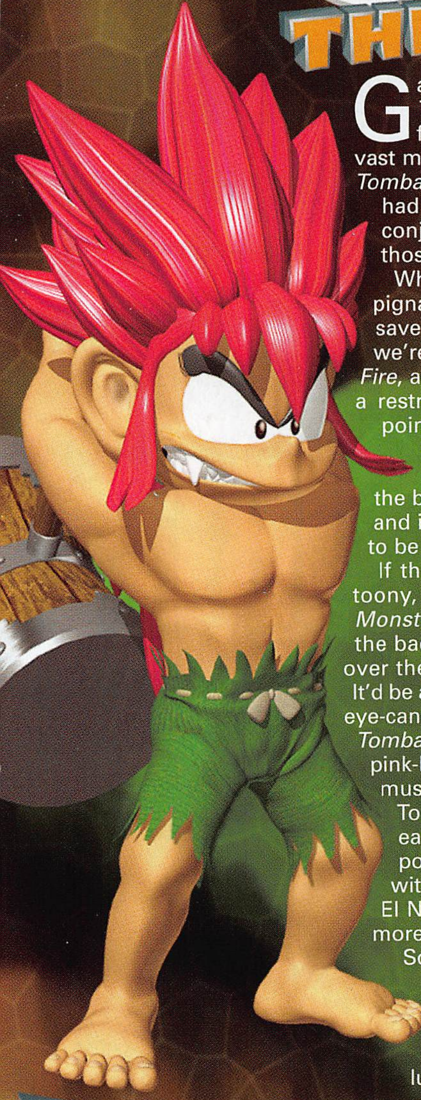




P PREVIEW			
	EGGO: I thought Square wasn't developing for Dreamcast	Developer - Squaresoft	1 Player
		Publisher - Square EA	Available 2000

TOMBA! 2

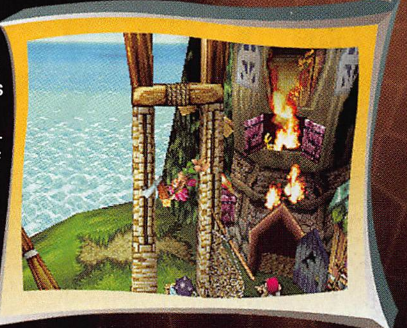
THE EVIL SWINE RETURN™



Games come and games go—even the good ones. To my dismay, *Tomba* came and went; and it left the building without much fanfare. Was it the pink hair? Did the loincloth scare away the vast majority of players? Who really wants to play a fruity game like *Tomba*? For starters, *Tomba* wasn't fruity. And secondly, if anyone had done their homework, they'd know that the same brain that conjured up *Ghosts 'N Goblins* created *Tomba*. Yup, I can see those heads turn with newfound interest now. How fickle we are...

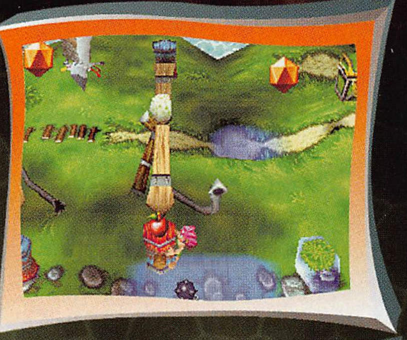


Whoopee Camp's making whoopee again. The evil swine have pignapped Tomba's main squeeze, Tabby. And guess who has to save her? So the story is circa 1980, or 1880 for that matter, but we're talking about the guys responsible for *MegaMan*, *Breath of Fire*, and *Ghouls 'N Ghosts* here. Like the first game, *Tomba 2* has a restrictive 3D system. Remember that *Tomba* had 3D branch points, giving players the option of traveling down a meadow or altering course and finding another area. *Tomba 2* is more of the same; except this time around, the graphics surpass the beautiful and gorgeous mark. Gone are most of the 2D sprites; and in their place are super crisp 3D polys. This is a game that has to be seen in motion to be appreciated.

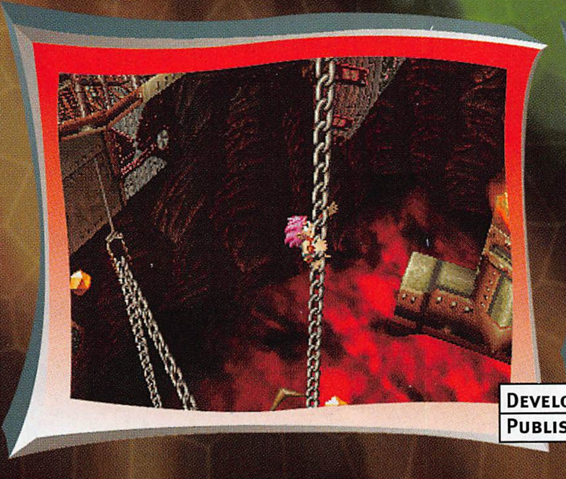


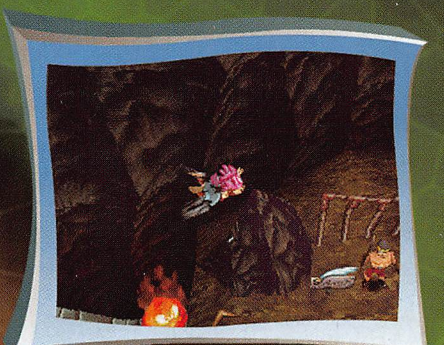
If there was ever a polygonal cartoon, this would be it. A cartoony, well-orchestrated soundtrack harks back to the days of *Monster Lair* for the TurboGrafx-16 CD. Both tropical and comical, the background music is yet another aspect that's much improved over the poorly-received original.

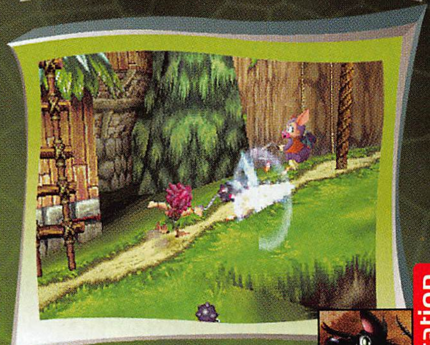
It'd be all fine and well if Whoopee Camp had been content with nicer eye-candy and better tuneage—most companies these days are—but *Tomba's* design team must be a bunch of perfectionists because the pink-haired boy's got a ton of new toys and skills. Someone must've told our scantily-clad caveboy to put some clothes on. Tomba has a 'walk-in closet'-size selection of costumes, and each of the garments Tomba wears endows him with a special power. The Pig Suit grants a hip attack and the ability to speak with porkys; Turbo Pants make Tomba run like a bathroom-bound El Niño after an all-you-can-eat Mexican buffet. Plus, there's a lot more that you'll need if Tomba ever hopes to see Tabby again.



So far, all signs are pointing in the right direction and the game's lookin' good. If Sony has anything to say about it, *Tomba 2* will receive the respect and recognition it deserves and then some, to make up for the first adventure. Tomba doesn't need much to get kick-started this time around. With a little luck, he could be the Master Higgins of the new millennium. C







DEVELOPER - WHOOPEE CAMP	1 PLAYER	CERBERUS: THIS LITTLE
PUBLISHER - SCEA	AVAILABLE 1ST QTR.	PIGGY GOT A NEW BAG, BABY.

P PREVIEW

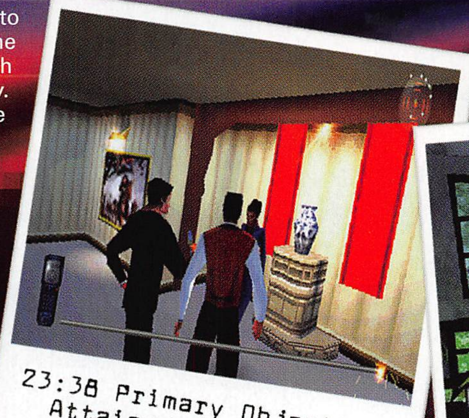
PlayStation

Agent Codename: Cerberus
Uploading transmission...

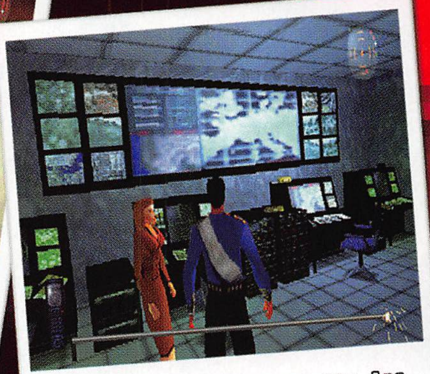
Infogrames, your mission, should you decide to accept it, is to port *Mission: Impossible* from the N64 to the PlayStation. You will be met with quite a challenge, as both systems differ greatly. We also don't want this game to suffer the same fate as *Tomorrow Never Dies*, the game.

In a little over a year, the conversion team has added a slew of new bells and whistles to the package, ranging from the subtle to the just plain obvious. All the space on that shiny CD will be put to good use with newly rendered movies. Remember the cool rendered artwork seen in mags before *MI* was released on N64? Soon you'll see it in motion on the PlayStation.

Shell and interface screens have a hi-tech spy look with a Windows-like interface. *MI*'s previously blasé soundtrack gets CD-quality treatment in a very big way. I can't stress enough how a great soundtrack helps a gaming experience. Another bonus for the port is the leap in graphical clarity—I don't smell any of that stinky mip-mapping here. Sony's grey box also affords the luxury of having dynamic lighting—not that fake stuff called vertex lighting, in designer-speak. Some of the surroundings appear to have been modified ever so slightly. Like we've seen in the past, while the backgrounds improve, the actual character models look worse.



23:38 Primary Objective
Attained Face Maker.



14:40 Infiltrated Security Ops
Commensing Video Freeze Access.

MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE

Another thing that's worse, which I hope improves drastically, is control. Here's one instance where the presumably non-functional Nintendo 64 pad kills the PlayStation. Allow me to explain. The control isn't atrocious. The problem is the PlayStation pad; there just aren't enough buttons on the face. It took me many missions before the Dual Shock came close to matching the ease of my N64 controller.

It's been a while since we played *Syphon Filter*, and another promising title in the genre won't hurt a bit. Sure, it's a year-old game with a few wrinkles ironed out, but wouldn't you rather play this than *Tomorrow Never Dies*? Oops, I'm not supposed to say that in a preview—strike my previous comment from the record. This message will self-destruct in five seconds... **C**



22:58 Attained Bio-Suit
Accessing North Lab.



14:00 Assassin is disposed -
Proceeding to West Hall.

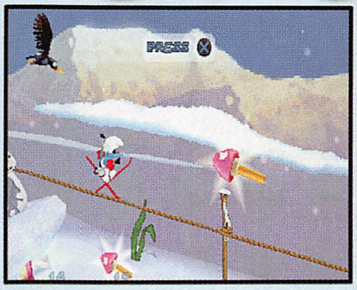
Updating Codec -
Encryption complete.
-Transmission end.

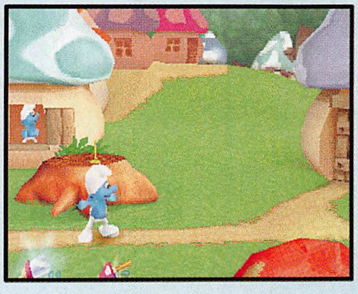
PREVIEW	CERBERUS: FIND THE MOLE!	DEVELOPER - X-AMPLE ARCHITECTURE	1 PLAYER
		PUBLISHER - INFOGRAMES	AVAILABLE 4TH QTR.



THE SMURFS







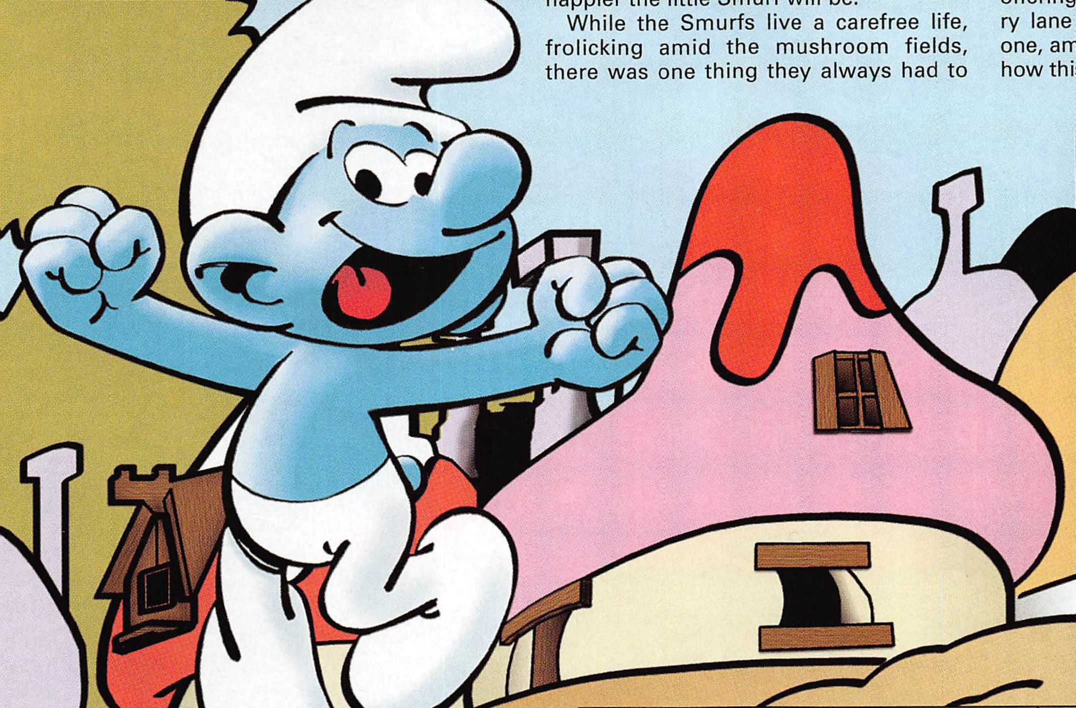
SMURFS!!! That's right, everybody's favorite blue bitties are back. While most of you weren't even a twinkle in your Old Man's eye when the Smurfs ruled Saturday morning cartoons, you should nonetheless be familiar with the pint-sized protagonists. Giving me the responsibility of previewing this title was a sort of joke on the part of ECM. I'm not known for my love of all things cutesy, and *GameFan* staffers thought it'd be a real hoot if I were forced to play a game that targets 7-year-olds and features little blue men (that Smurfette is just a guy in a dress, I'm convinced). Little did they know that as an impressionable pre-teen, *Smurfs* were a major part of my television-viewing diet. I love the Smurfs, man.



The game is broken up into two parts, although there's little to differentiate them. The easier mode is all about caring for Baby Smurf. You must collect a series of baby bottles in order to make Baby Smurf happy. The better you're doing, the happier the little Smurf will be.

While the Smurfs live a carefree life, frolicking amid the mushroom fields, there was one thing they always had to watch out for: the evil Gargamel and his fleabag cat, Azrael (that and maybe bending over for the soap around Vanity). The second part of *The Smurfs* is all about rescuing your fellow Smurf from his clutches. Navigate treacherous surroundings using Hefty, and defeat the magician and his cronies. All of the action is standard, 2D platform fare, conforming to the industry-old 'rules,' from jumping on the heads of critters, to collecting an assortment of gems, to accessing secret areas filled with extra goodies.

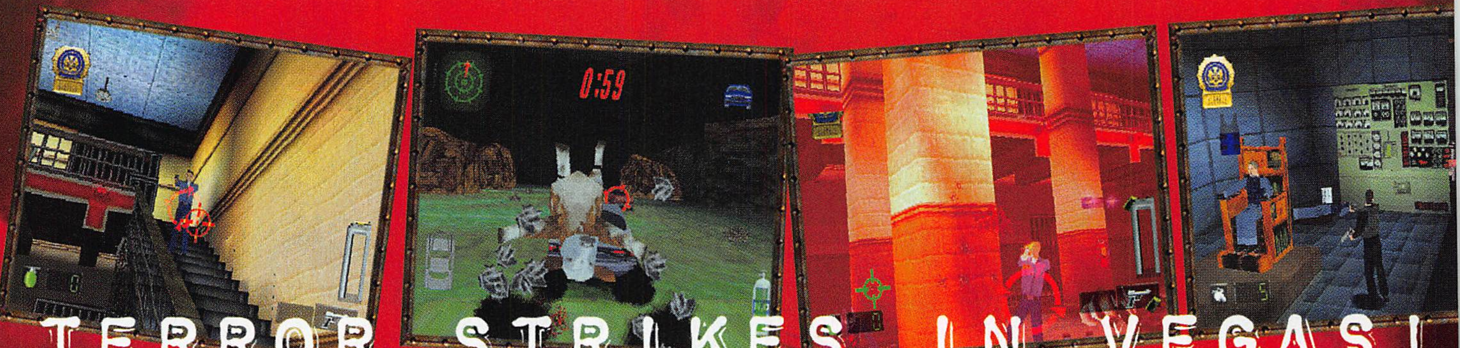
It's important to note that this game has been designed for the younger gamer. The level of difficulty is quite low for an experienced player. This is not to say that the developers have skimped. While it may be a shorter platformer than most, the graphics look great and the gameplay is solid. The cheery backgrounds, kid-friendly themes, and perky music make this a potential hot commodity for the little ones, while offering a relaxing stroll down memory lane for older gamers. I, for one, am very interested to see how this title turns out. J







Developer - Heliovisions	1 Player	Judge: Is it much farther, Papa Smurf?	P Preview
Publisher - Infogrames	Available 4th Qtr.		



TERROR STRIKES IN VEGAS!

Terrorists again?! Why is it that every time I go on vacation, I gotta run into a bunch of frikkin' meatheads bent on world domination? Weren't my exploits in the original *Die Hard Trilogy* on Saturn and PlayStation enough for you? Three movie blockbusters? OK then, what about Samuel... can't you get him to headline *Die Hard Trilogy 2*? Huh? *Episode I*? Damn! Fine, I'll do it...

When *Die Hard Trilogy* was first released, gamers everywhere were blown away by the multiple modes of play: 3rd person action, light gun insanity, and driving craziness... all on one little PS disc. That's three separate engines for the price of one — what a bargain! The sequel, *Die Hard Trilogy 2*, follows the same basic layout, mimicking the original's various modes of play. The catch is that the sequel no longer sports first generation PS graphics, and, of course, we won't be seeing a Saturn version (funny how the PS and Saturn were once rivals). Perhaps a Dreamcast rev will soon follow... multiple platforms equates to multiple paychecks for developers.

This time around, McClane finds himself knee-deep in the city of sin... Las Vegas. His old friend Kenny Sinclair has been named warden of a major Las Vegas prison. A celebration at the prison (hmm, a raging party at a maximum security prison... sounds like a good idea to me!) quickly turns into sheer chaos as a crazy, OZ-inspired riot breaks out. And as always, the local law enforcement comes off about as capable as our newest *GameFan* intern... "so I heard you guys write... some kind of magazine here?"

DHT's gameplay is now broken up into two categories — Arcade and Movie Mode. In Arcade, players can manually select which type of game they want to play (driving, lightgun, 3rd person). While the movie option lets the game play out in a pre-determined order. Unlike the original *DHT*, the gameplay is not comprised of rigid categories (e.g., you're in the lightgun mode now); instead, all three game-types are randomly woven into the storyline.

If you're a fan of lightgun, action/adventure, or driving games, *DHT2* has got ya covered. While McClane's onscreen antics are best suited for DVD purchases and Blockbuster rentals, the fun still continues in the virtual world. Expect more on this awesome title in the coming months, and remember... always wear your shoes in a gunfight. **F**

JOHN McCLANE IS BACK!



DIE HARD TRILOGY 2

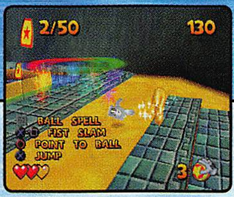
FURY: DROPPING EUROPEANS OUT OF SKYSCRAPERS HAS NEVER LOOKED SO GOOD!	DEVELOPER - NSPACE	1 PLAYER
	PUBLISHER - FOX INTERACTIVE	AVAILABLE 1ST QTR.

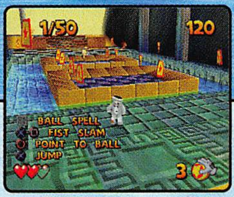
PREVIEW

COMING SOON





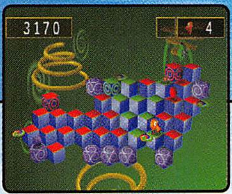






Glover (Hasbro Interactive) — Apparently Glover's antics on the N64 just weren't enough, because the five digit wonder is now heading to a PlayStation near you. Must fit like a glove <gah!>



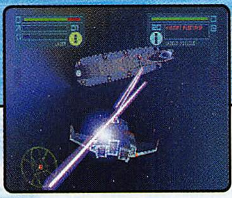


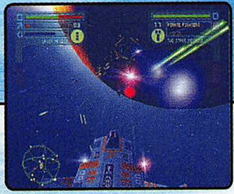
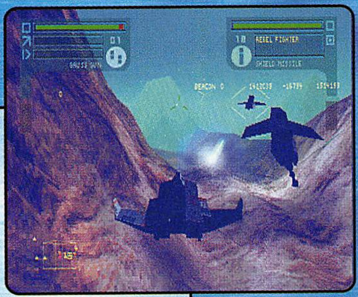




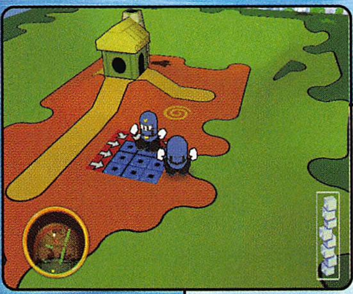
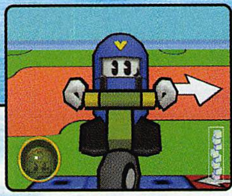


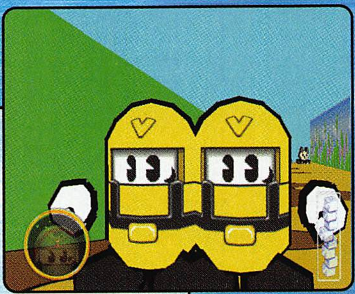
Q*bert (Hasbro Interactive) — Retro gaming continues on the PlayStation with this age old classic. New stages and few added goodies should make this a must have for fans of the mighty Q. Still, I miss the cartoon!

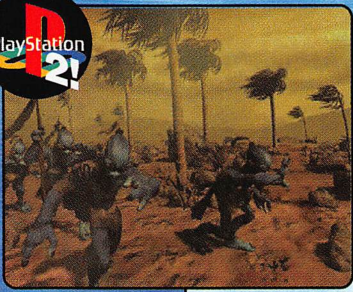



Colony Wars: Red Sun (Psygnosis) — The definitive PlayStation space shooter is back for a third time—if you don't count *Blast Radius*, that is. Expect classic Psygnosis lighting insanity and dazzling weapon effects to accompany this awesome space adventure.

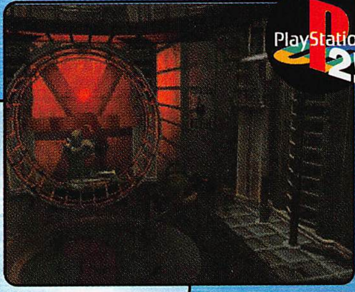



Team Buddies (Psygnosis) — The cuteness of *Bomberman* meets *Tiberian Sun* in one of the first cool, innovative RTS games for PS. Take your little buddies and combine them for bigger and better weapons and more buddies. Eggo can't wait!







Munch's Oddysee (GT Interactive) — Oddworld Inhabitants appears at the top of their game (and I don't just mean graphically) with *Munch's Oddysee*. Gameplay should mimic the *Abe's* series as Munch attempts to rescue helpless Mudokons.



PlayStation
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NINTENDO64
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Deus
Lain:
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Knights
Lain:
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NINTENDO64

Reviews





Rare-ly do we get a game of *Donkey Kong 64* caliber. It seems as if the stars have to align, the calendar must be in the fourth quarter (i.e., Christmas), and Nintendo must be searching the land for the Chosen One of games... only then will the magicians at Rare come forth from their cave with a new product in-hand. This offering is thrown to the masses, and within seconds, devoured before it hits the ground. Then, the wait begins anew...

Those who've played *Banjo-Kazooie* know what to expect from *Donkey Kong 64*—a colorful, cartoony world, yours to explore in a scavenger hunt of epic proportions. In *Banjo*, the treasures were musical notes, puzzle pieces, Jinjo Birds, and Mumbo Tokens. In *DK64*, the items are bananas, golden bananas, coins, and film. Beyond the basic gameplay and shared developer, that's where the comparison ends; *Donkey Kong 64* outperforms *Banjo* in nearly every other category.



The first thing Rare did was populate Kong Country with a barrel full of likable monkeys. The game lets you control five separate simians: old-schoolers Donkey and Diddy are joined by newcomers Lanky, Chunky, and Tiny (it's good to see more female Kongs *climbing* the corporate ladder). Funky and Cranky Kong are back, though they're just shop owners, and the voluptuous Candy Kong runs a shop where she teaches you the proper way to play your musical instrument <cough>.

What sets *DK64* apart from the rest of its scavenger hunting ilk is the color-coded, character-specific item collection. Each Kong's got a color: Donkey's yellow, Diddy's red, Tiny's purple, Chunky's green, and Lanky's blue. While wandering the expansive environments, you'll come across coins and bananas of the wrong color, meaning you'll have to return later with the correct Kong to pick up these items. "Change barrels" are scattered throughout the levels, and a quick leap into one of these lets you switch to the Kong of your choice. And yes, the Kongs all have unique characteristics (e.g., Chunky's a gentle-giant—powerful, slow, and not endowed with "hops," whereas Diddy's small, fast, and nimble). Rare has what it takes when crafting a cute world with lovable characters, and the *Donkey Kong* theme is much more appealing and familiar than the world of *Banjo*.

At first, I was leery of *DK64* since I have a history of disliking scavenger hunt 3D platformers, due to their 'shallow' gameplay. But after an extended session with Rare's latest, the character-specific item collection had me hooked. Walk by some red coins which you can't pick up and make a mental note to return later with Diddy. Purple bananas? A job for Tiny. Pretty soon, you've got a growing "to-do" list to keep track of in your head. Because of that, there's almost always something to do, and rarely does boredom or "What do I do now?" set in.

The second area where *Donkey Kong 64* towers over the competition is graphics—it's a visual powerhouse. Combine that Rare magic with the power of the Expansion Pak, and you've got a graphical giant brewing. This is the first game that **requires** the Expansion Pak, which comes packaged with the game. Just gawk at these screenshots, and you'll see that the extra memory is well worth the effort. *DK64's* environments are much larger and beautiful than *Banjo's*. In fact, the areas are so sprawling in size that you'll need to use banana-porters to get around faster. Plus, the environments are colorful, lush, and eye-poppingly astounding. *DK64's* worthy of the greatest compliment you can pay a Nintendo game: "The game's so gorgeous... it doesn't **look** like an N64 game."

The music's shines, as far as N64 composition goes, and the rendered intro features a rap which goes through a roll-call of all the Kongs. Finally, *Donkey Kong 64* has some gratuitous multi-player modes as well. There's a *Jet Force Gemini*-like deathmatch mode and a *Super Smash Bros.*-ish knockdown, drag-out fight. While these are moderately entertaining, they're more afterthoughts than serious draws; you'll be playing the single-player game much longer than either of these.









In the end, there's just one obstacle preventing *Donkey Kong 64* from reigning as King of the Hill in 3D platformer land... and that's UbiSoft's *Rayman 2*. While they're both visual heavyweights when fueled by the power of the miracle-working Expansion Pak, *Rayman 2* surpasses *DK64* in gameplay, because it's more varied (not always a scavenger hunt). Other than *Rayman 2, Donkey Kong 64* is the only game you'll need this Christmas for your N64. There's a lot of bang for your buck here (we played for over 15 hours and yet the game was less than 10% complete), and the game bears the legendary Rare seal of approval. Mmm... Ba-na-na!

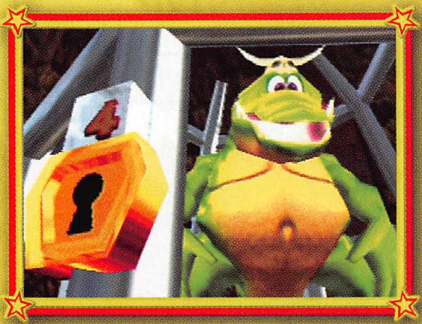
Eggo still wonders who's leaving all these gold coins lying around.

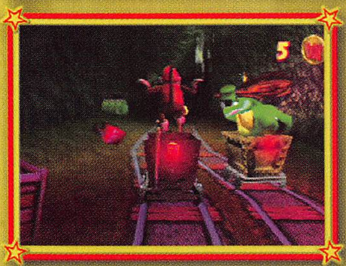
DONKEY KONG® 64



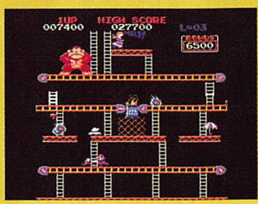












O.G. Donkey Kong

Tucked away in the dark recesses of this cart is the original *Donkey Kong*! Yup, we're talkin' the game that started it all. Mario before he was Mario; Donkey Kong before Jr. or Diddy. When we found this gem hidden away in *DK64*, our band of ninja gamers couldn't stop playing. The catch is you're given only one life (though you can earn extras), and the goal is to clear all four stages to up the game's difficulty, then start over again. As we kept playing, more and more people filtered in, drawn by the classic sound effect of Mario's jump. And when they saw what the hubbub was about, everyone wanted a shot at the controller. Perhaps it's a depressing social commentary on how 'fun' 3D platformers are, but we were much more excited and sitting straight up in our chairs when playing the original *Donkey Kong* compared to *DK64*. Take a picture of every fairy in the game, and it'll unlock the ability to play the original *DK* from the title screen.

Viewpoint Score	Developer - Rare	1-4 Players	Eggo: Banjo, meet Donkey
:93	Publisher - Nintendo	Available Now	Kong. Donkey Kong, Banjo.

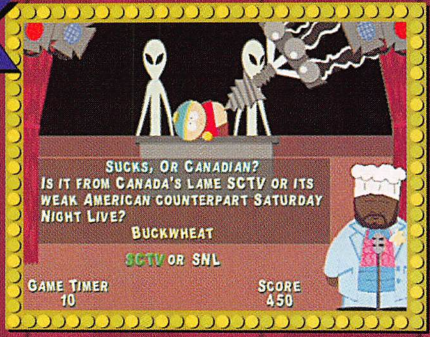
R Review

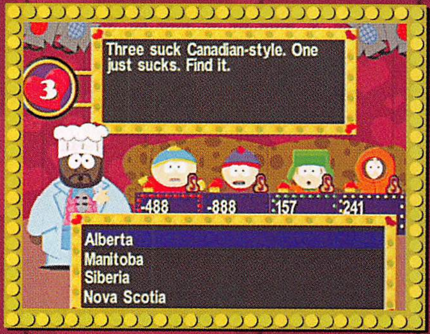
SOUTH PARK Chef's LUV SHACK



Everyone's favorite cafeteria chef/elementary school mentor is movin' up in the world. Starting out as just a guy serving Salisbury steak, Chef (with a little vocal support from the popular Isaac Hayes) has claimed a share of the limelight and now stars in his very own game! Acclaim's makin' good use of that South Park license... First the FPS, then the rally game, now the party game—*Mario Party* meets *South Park*, with a little useless trivia thrown in for good measure... sound like fun? Then a quick romp in *Chef's Luv Shack* is just what you need...

Let's start with the trivia. The questions cover a wide range of topics, requiring knowledge from the *South Park* television show to the 1991 Denver Broncos and general science. What? Surely ye jest... science knowledge in a *South Park* game? Of course, how else are you going to answer the questions that trouble everyday society, such as "What's the scientific name for a fart?" Ahh, that's better... rest assured, *South Park* fans, this game's got that patented Matt Stone and Trey Parker sense of humor. The topics all aim to offend, pickin' on groups such as homosexuals, Canadians, and hippies. There's Big Gay Al-speak ("I'm Thuper, thanks for Athking") in some of the questions, and there's even a Cartman Anal Probe mini-game. In it, you're forced to categorize seven items correctly in 10 seconds (e.g., Is this name from coffee or *Star Wars*?), and if you fail, Cartman gets a big, twirling drill thrust in his rectum—a sight that's not for the faint of heart (poor Fury... he's still traumatized).







But if trivia isn't for you (call it a hunch, but I think there are *South Park* fans out there who're... how shall I say this... a little low brow?), you'll find a bunch of multi-player mini-games to amuse yourself with. Some of them are like the arcade classics *Donkey Kong*, *Asteroids*, *Super Sprint*, or *Galaga*. Plus, there's new mini-games, like Roundup—a mix of the board game Hungry Hippos and *Poy Poy*. Just think, gather four rowdy *South Park* fans around an N64, start talking about fart jokes, play some competitive mini-games, and you can imagine the hijinks that ensue.

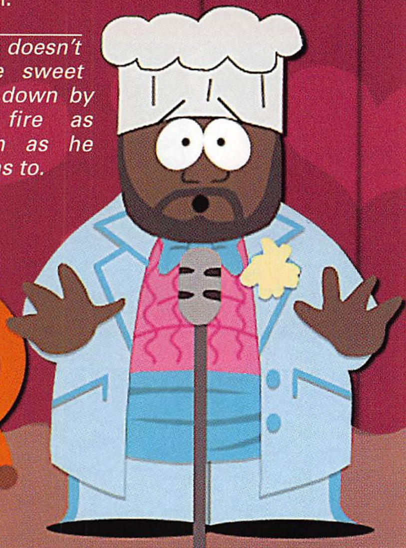


At the end of the day, the bottom line is *South Park: Chef's Luv Shack* is fun... but not $50 fun (more like $5 fun). It's certainly very entertaining, but a lot of that stems from the novelty, which wears off eventually. Also, the pool of questions which the game draws on for trivia is shockingly shallow. This is a major problem when you start seeing repeat questions in your first sitting with the game. Lastly, *Chef's Luv Shack* is like *Mario Party* in that it's meant to be a multi-player experience. You don't want to play this as a single-player game; two-players is only slightly entertaining; while three or four is a riot. Because of the game's questionable 'value,' *South Park* fans should check this game out... but only as a rental.

Eggo doesn't make sweet love down by the fire as much as he claims to.



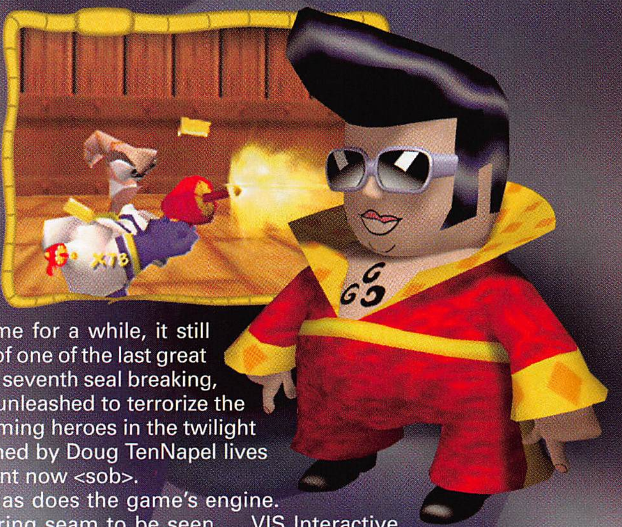


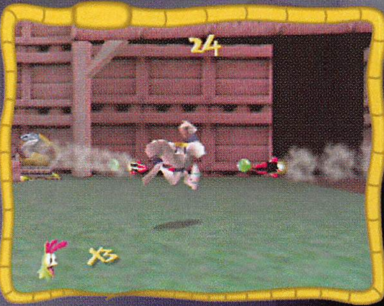


R REVIEW	EGGO: WHAT? NO KATHY LEE?	DEVELOPER - ACCLAIM PUBLISHER - ACCLAIM	1-4 PLAYER AVAILABLE NOW	VIEWPOINT SCORE: 72









Though we've known about this game for a while, it still brings a tear to my eye when I think of one of the last great 2D platformers going 3D. It's like the seventh seal breaking, as the Dark Lord of the Polygon is finally unleashed to terrorize the world. Jim was one of the last 2D platforming heroes in the twilight of the 16-bit era, and the character designed by Doug TenNapel lives on to this day... although he looks different now <sob>.

Jim's polygonal make-over looks nice, as does the game's engine. There's not a broken texture or shimmering seam to be seen... VIS Interactive has crafted quite the solid 3D world for Jim to wander. There's plenty of color and animation, and the frame-rate is steady throughout. The only downside is the environments aren't that big, compared to other 3D platformers such as *Banjo-Kazooie*.

EWJ3D's gameplay is much like *Gex 64*, only this time it's a scavenger hunt to find marbles and golden udders. Why? To unlock the doors in Jim's mind. That's right, everyone's favorite annelid has fallen victim to some mysterious malady, which leaves our hero bedridden in the hospital. The only way he'll recover is if he explores the twisted, dark recesses of his mind. An unusual premise for sure, but that's what Earthworm Jim's always been about: bizzare, unconventional, off-the-wall humor.



Speaking of humor, *EWJ3D* has a constant stream of chaotic gags and things that make you go "Huh?" From the colonel requesting that you find his shorts, to the cow deity asking you to collect golden udders, the game certainly tries. But that something special from the original *EWJ* isn't in this game; that intangible quality (call it the TenNapel factor, if you will), the magic behind bungee-jumping with Major Mucus, whipping Peter Puppy to get him home, or Bob the Goldfish... that magic isn't here. And after playing *DK64* and *Rayman 2*, this game needs every ounce of character it can muster.

As a 3D platformer, *EWJ3D's* slightly above average. Its biggest 'flaw' though is that it has incredibly enormous shoes to fill, carrying the surname Earthworm Jim, and that's something *3D* doesn't do—live up to a franchise which hard-core gamers treasure and hold quite dear.

Eggo lives in constant fear of being crushed by a cow falling from the sky.









VIEWPOINT SCORE: 78	DEVELOPER - VIS INTERACTIVE PUBLISHER - ROCKSTAR	1 PLAYER AVAILABLE NOW	EGGO: IT'S A WHOLE NEW CAN OF WORMS...

R REVIEW



NUCLEAR STRIKE 64

In the early days of the N64, I played every game that came out. From *Killer Instinct Gold* to *Mission Impossible,* it didn't really matter the genre or developer. The Fun Machine lacked in variety and 3rd party support. So when Midway's *Chopper Attack* arrived at my local EB, I foolishly picked it up, thinking it could replicate the insane aerial combat I'd come to know and love in EA's famed *Strike* series... Thank god for store credit!

Although EA developed the PlayStation version of *Nuclear Strike,* THQ now has the distinct honor of carrying the *Strike* Torch into the new millennium. I'm happy to report *Nuclear Strike 64* is among the series' best endeavors, and if all goes well, a DC rev may not be far off.

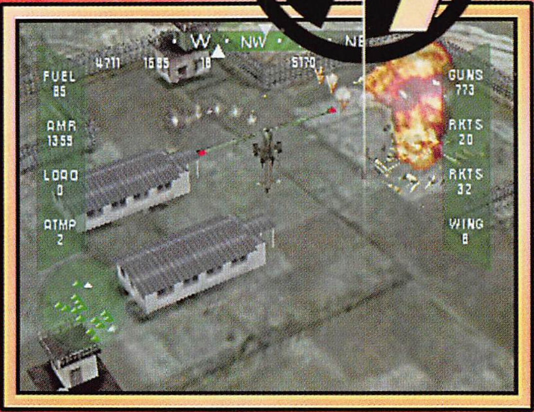
Obviously *NS64's* graphics look better than the PS version, but that's nearly a given for a PS-to-N64 port. Texture quality alone isn't enough to sell this one, but thanks to improvements in enemy AI (bad guys no longer fall asleep at the wheel... err, stick), players will be much more challenged.

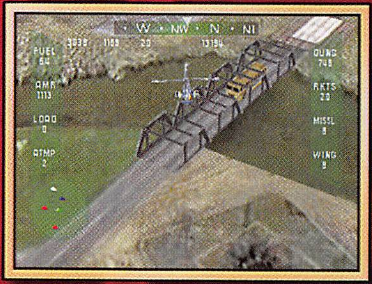
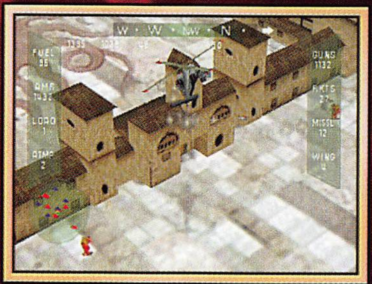
For those unfamiliar with the *Strike* series, let me just say that *NS* includes about as many sim elements as *Street Fighter* does real martial arts. Controlling your chopper or any of the other 15 vehicles is child's play. Your primary concern lies not with physics, but rather, the coroner's office. For example, your first mission is to drop the hammer, by completely decimating an enemy village. Just keep your eyes glued to the radar and chase down those blue targets. It's the simplicity of these missions that keeps the fun of *NS* fresh, as the primary objective is destruction... plain and simple. *NS* is, after all, an action game. We all know what happens when you complicate an already solid franchise with blah-level tasks... *Soul Reaver*.

One of the main problems with *NS,* however, is the placement of the camera. Basically, the designers brought the camera in a bit too tight on the action, making it difficult at times to locate the whereabouts of the enemy. The option to control the camera would have been an excellent and much-needed addition.

If you're familiar with *Chopper Attack* on the N64 and are worried that lightning may strike twice with *NS*, I'm here to put your concerns at ease. *NS64* is a welcome addition to the *Strike* family and maybe—just maybe—we'll see a completely original *Strike* game in the near future... *Valley Strike,* perhaps... Your mission? Destroy as many Valley Doods as possible within the time limit. "Like, cool!"

Fury dreams of one day flying an attack chopper but he'd probably never get off the ground 'cause he'd lose the keys. Then he wouldn't be able to find ***them*** *'cause he lost his glasses.*







R REVIEW FURY: Low fuel?! How come Airwolf never had to refuel?	Developer - Pacific Power & Light Publisher - THQ	1 Players Available Now	Viewpoint Score :84

WORMS ARMAGEDDON







How do you eat fried worms? Me, I like mine with a lot of Napalm... and some ketchup. What may be one of the most overlooked and underrated console games, *Worms: Armageddon*, may finally get some much-deserved respect on the N64.

While the lack of popularity is unfortunate, it's understandable. *Worms* is one of those "lowly" 2D dinosaurs, with no light-sourcing, polygons, or licenses to excite Little Timmy. While you can go to the GF Town Square any day of the week and listen to ECM preach the 2D gospel on his soapbox, I doubt you'll find a crowd gathered (unless you count the standard complement of homeless, crazy people who come for the only free show in town). Both developers and consumers alike have turned their backs on games of this ilk.

If this indifference costs *Worms* an audience, that would be a crime. *Worms: Armageddon* is one of the most enjoyable multi-player experiences available. A turn-based strategy title with just a dash of mirth, *WA*'s gameplay makes it incredibly addictive. Play as one of four teams of four, battling to be the last group of battle-worms alive. Select from a vast armory of weapons to dispose of your enemies, each death device capable of wreaking its own special brand of devastation. Call in airstrikes, plant dynamite, or use your bazooka. When in close, break out the shotgun or Uzi; or if pugilism is your bag, cold-cock your enemy with a fierce Dragon Punch.

Not only is the cache of weapons extensive, but so is the strategy; you'll need brains to win in *WA*. It's important to keep track of which worm's turn is next, so you can target him before he targets you. Utilize items such as a grappling hook or bungie cord to get to those hard-to-reach places where a cowardly worm may be holed up (doh! No pun intended). Also remember to avoid nuking your own guys; friendly fire tends to be just as deadly as that of your enemy.

The random map generator ensures that you'll never play the same level twice, and the variety of terrain, obstacles, and hazards ensures that you will constantly be changing strategies. While it is 2D, the graphics are still beautiful, sporting some great hand-drawn backgrounds and the cutest little pink mercenaries you've ever seen. *Worms: Armageddon* is a joy to play and should be on every N64 owner's Christmas list. Now if you'll excuse me, I have to give the smackdown to ECM.

The Judge enjoys watching his opponents suffer—cutting them up one segment at a time.





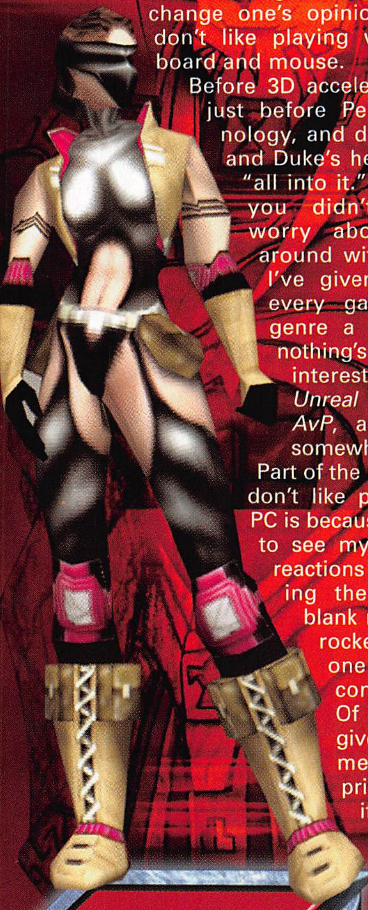




VIEWPOINT SCORE :89	DEVELOPER - TEAM 17	1-4 PLAYERS	JUDGE: PREPARE TO EAT DIRT... OH, WAIT...
	PUBLISHER - INFOGRAMES	AVAILABLE NOW	

R REVIEW





I carefully creep along the wall, searching for a target... Poking my head around the corner... Argh! That damn Eggo and his stinkin' railgun nailed me square between the eyes. Five years ago, I loved first person shooters. Five years... that's 1,826 days... that's a long enough time to change one's opinion. Now, I don't like playing with a keyboard and mouse.

Before 3D accelerator cards, just before Pentium technology, and during *Doom* and Duke's heyday, I was "all into it." Back then, you didn't have to worry about looking around with a mouse. I've given practically every game in this genre a chance, but nothing's captured my interest except for *Unreal Tournament*, *AvP*, and *Tribes*... somewhat.

Part of the reason why I don't like playing on a PC is because I don't get to see my opponents' reactions when blasting them at point blank range with a rocket. This is one battle that consoles win. Of course, we give up the element of surprise and trade it for camaraderie and the party-game factor to play with controller in hand. That's why *GoldenEye* was such a great game and did so well; because on one side of the coin there's great gameplay, and on the other there's a multi-player mode everyone loves. That's why *Turok: Dinosaur Hunter* wasn't such a great game... ever heard of multi-player? But multi-player is exactly why *Turok Rage Wars* is so much fun. In case you didn't know, *Turok Rage Wars* is strictly a multi-player deal, against either players or "bots." It's Acclaim's middle child between *Turok 2* and *Turok 3*.

We know the graphics are sizzling; it's Iguana. Strap in a RAM Pak and the N64 becomes a baby PC, loaded with real-time lighting and all the technical mumbo-jumbo you could ask for. Gameplay-wise, I'm not a fan of Trials mode—it's a bad attempt at appeasing those among us who need a quest-based game, but everything else is sharp. Bots in multi-player mode can be adjusted to suit any player, from the just plain SAG to the ninja gamer. New weapons are cheap, control is better than ever, and the level design is perfect.

Perfect Dark's been pushed back until next year, *The World is Not Enough* (by Eurocom) is a ways off, so there are no first person shooters besides *Rage Wars* coming out for a while. *Turok* wins by process of elimination. The staff and I had almost as much fun with *Rage Wars* as we did with *GoldenEye*, and that's as good a compliment as any. I thought *Quake II* was a relatively respectable port, but that was before playing *Rage Wars*.

The last time Cerberus had more than 10 frags was when defragging his hard drive.





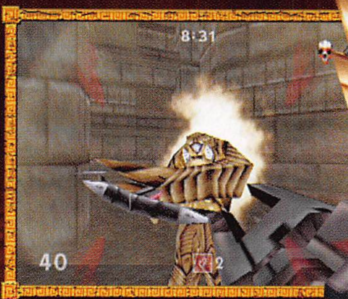


TUROK RAGE WARS



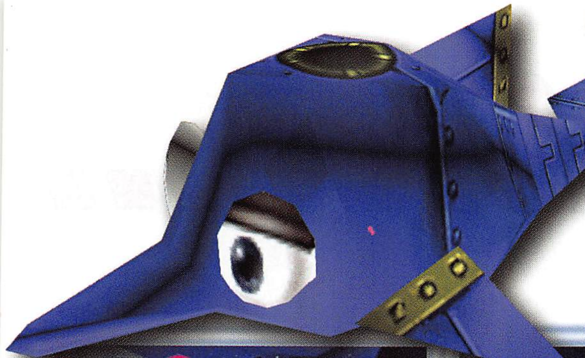


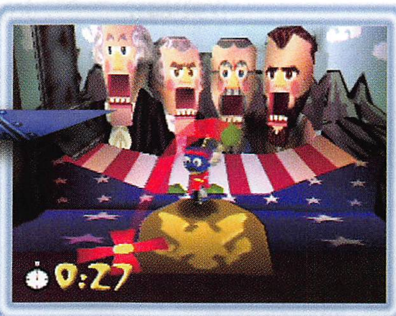






R REVIEW	CERBERUS: HELP! TUROK HELP!	DEVELOPER - IGUANA PUBLISHER - ACCLAIM	1-4 PLAYERS AVAILABLE NOW	VIEWPOINT SCORE :91











Few N64 games really stuck out at E3 this year. Obviously, I was blown away by *Perfect Dark* and dazzled by the antics of a certain gorilla, but it was difficult picking winners from developers whose games weren't quite as Rare.

Emerging from the land of Dreamcast titles (ahh, *Soul Calibur*... good...), I was weary from a hard day's gaming. Heading towards Nintendo's booth in hopes of finding less crowds, I encountered *Rocket* (originally known as *Sprocket*) at a lone kiosk... The game sat there alone, beckoning to this exhausted editor.



ROCKET
robot on wheels™





Sucker Punch's (a small development house established two years ago in Washington) first endeavor is an N64 3D platformer, and it looks surprisingly solid. I say "surprisingly" because N64 games that look this good are a rarity, usually available only from a 3rd party with a massive budget like Acclaim or Konami. Everything from the colorful intro to the futuristic design of the theme park looks super crisp.

The main character, Rocket, strays heavily from the typical hero design. He's a robot/unicycle equipped with a unique tracking beam that allows players to pick up and manipulate most objects, and if you tell me that's not in the least bit unusual, I've heard it all.

In his quest to return Whoopie the Walrus, the kidnapped mascot of Whoopie world, Rocket must complete a variety of cleverly crafted mini-games. Some are as simple as defeating a huge chicken in a harmless game of tic-tac-toe while others involve designing and test-riding your own rollercoaster. Though some of the games grow tiresome, they sure beat the typical scavenger hunt-like gameplay found in most N64 platformers.

What really makes *Rocket* stand out other than unique play mechanics and awesome graphics is the true-to-life physics engine. Unlike *Mario 64*, in which only certain platforms sway from side to side when you step on them, *Rocket's* environments are programmed to react realistically at all times. Throw a box at a wall or on a platform and, depending on its mass, it will fall or tumble to a certain side.

Sucker Punch obviously understood the importance of delivering equally vibrant graphics and truly unique gameplay because *Rocket* is a perfect balance of both. While *Rocket* may have generated little buzz at E3, it will no doubt land on store shelves with a much louder and well-deserved bang!







Fury still recalls getting lost at a Coney Island amusement park, searching in tears for his parents all day... and that was just last Christmas.

VIEWPOINT SCORE •88	DEVELOPER - SUCKER PUNCH	1 PLAYER	FURY: SUCKER PUNCH LANDS A KNOCKOUT BLOW.
	PUBLISHER - UBI SOFT	AVAILABLE NOW	

REVIEW


A Site...
GAME CAVE

for Sore Eyes











My How Times Have Changed...

Once upon a time, RPGs were the Shidoshis of the video game world: lonely, depressing, and at times, incredibly amusing—not necessarily in a good way, however. These days, though, you can't take a step around GFHQ without bumping into the latest chapter of *Crusaders of Remorse, Look Ma! I'm a Fourteen-Year-Old Master Swordsman: The Revenge* or some other game that's labeled an RPG or features "RPG elements." With the recent intro of *Thousand Arms*, the dating sim has even become involved in the U.S. gaming scene and is probably the only way our favorite red-headed stepchild is gonna get a date (i.e., Shidoshi). This once also-ran genre has thrived in a world that has seen the demise of the shooter, 2D platformer, and the adventure game—genres that routinely trounced the RPG 'back in the day' and now languish somewhere in gaming oblivion; survival of the fittest, or some such nonsense, I suppose, <grumble>.

You Say Chocobo, I Say Toruneko

Dungeon exploration games. You either love them or hate them. At least that's the general consensus. Games like *Chocobo's Mysterious Dungeon* and *Toruneko's Great Adventure* generally appeal to much younger gamers and there's a pretty good reason why: Simpler quests, simpler graphics and a very repetitive adventure. They're usually complemented by scads of randomly generated dungeons and provide nigh-endless gameplay if you can get over the other shortcomings (anybody else remember *Fatal Labyrinth*?); even the recently released *Climax Landers* has this 'feature.' However, while *Evolution* also follows the conventions set down by its forebears, it also tries to do things at least a little bit differently—enough to warrant a look from those of you (like me) that wouldn't touch a dungeon exploration game with a 10-foot controller cord.

Smith and Wesson, Meet Mag and Linear

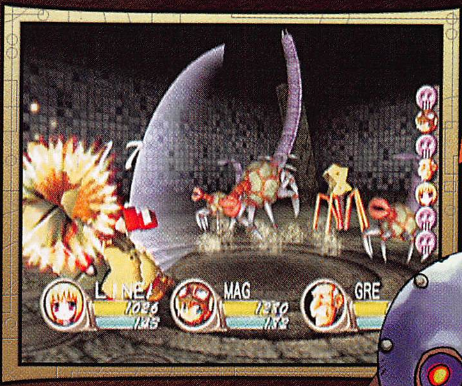
The story in *Evolution* is part Indiana Jones, part oddball Japanese RPG, and a dash of off-the-wall wackiness. You are Mag Launcher, heroic heir to a family legacy of adventurers. With Linear Cannon in tow, you're off on a slightly askew series of quests. Only problem is that you're deep in







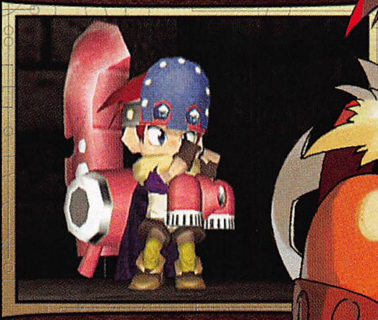
debt (thanks Dad) and need to go a-questing to earn enough cash so you can actually attempt to get somewhere in life (sounds like most college grads). So off you go, embarking on a series of whimsical (there's that word again) adventures all in the name of money and fun. This game is about as light-hearted as they get, with a very weird, almost comic tone that may not sit well with gamers weaned on straightforward RPGs from Square and company—those of you raised on a steady diet of doom and gloom and abjectly depressing storylines. Those that enjoy a more 'off the beaten track' sort of romp will be right at home (people that enjoyed *Grandia*, for instance... which should be everybody, right?). Naturally, there's the 'evil villain'-type out to ruin all the fun, but he's just as comical as the rest of the game (especially when he's trying to take the noticeably younger Linear as his, uh, 'maid').





Highly Evolved

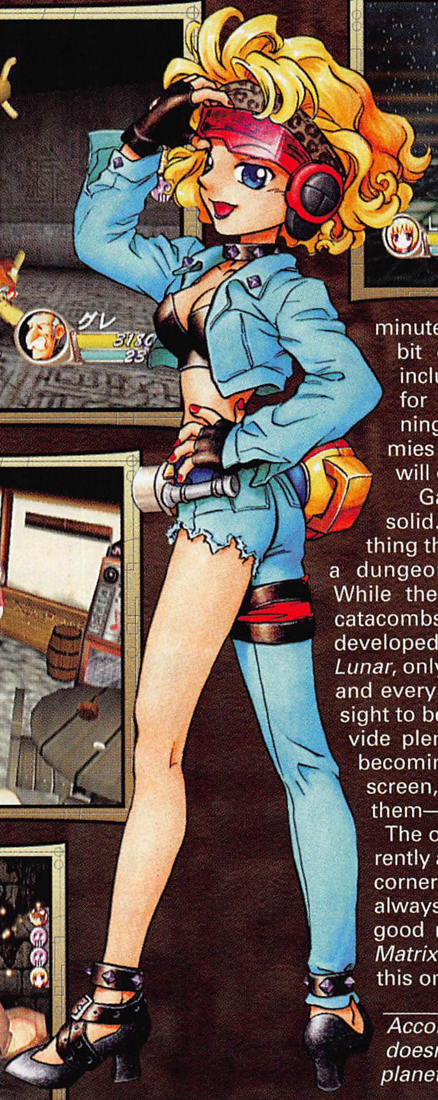
As far as the graphics go, *Evolution* is a beauty. Sting apparently had the DC hardware wired early on, because even months and months after its import release, it can still hang with the best the system has to offer. An incredible array of stunning textures and a suitably high frame-rate (naturally) are the order of the day. While it doesn't go overboard with lots of fancy lighting effects and other key buzzwords like bump-mapping and specularity, it does what it does well. I'm currently just watching the game in 'idle' mode and admiring the handiwork that went into the environs. For a game staged mainly in a series of dreary dungeons, *Evolution* is a joy to behold.

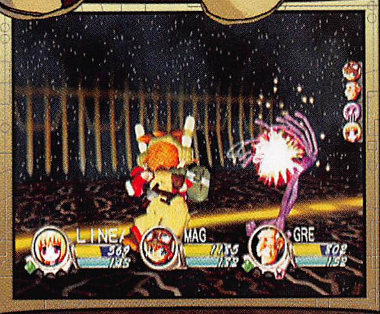


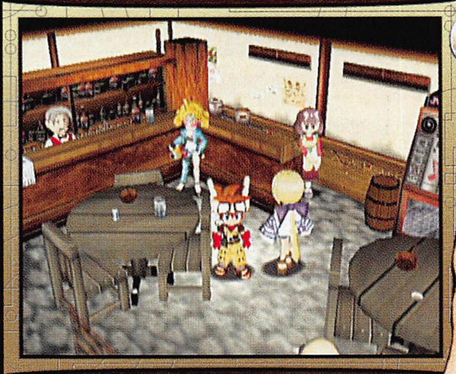
The music is suitably charming as well, though it can tend to loop a little too much for my tastes. With each track repeating every minute and a half, it can get a bit grating, but with the inclusion of certain themes for different events (running into a pack of enemies for instance) the music will change accordingly.





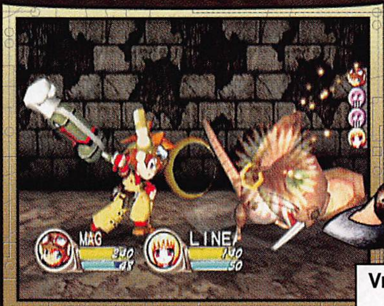






Gameplay is amazingly solid... especially for something that's as utterly basic as a dungeon exploration game. While the randomly generated catacombs aren't for everybody, the combat system is amazingly well-developed. It actually reminds me a lot of the combat in *Grandia* and *Lunar*, only in full 3D. There's limited movement about the map and each and every attack is animated amazingly well. The special attacks are a sight to behold with some of Mag's more stunning Cyframe attacks provide plenty of eye candy to rot even the most jaded gamer. As is becoming increasingly popular in RPGs, every enemy appears on screen, so if you want to try and avoid foes, you can sneak around them—just be aware that some are much more vigilant than others.

The only 'negative' for *Evolution* is the fact that it's the only RPG currently available on the US DC. Sure, *Climax Landers* is 'just around the corner' (PR-speak for 'sometime in the next six months') and there's always those 'other' RPGs left behind in Japan (and believe me, it's for good reason... don't even let me hear a tear being shed for *Black Matrix*, <ugh>). As a brief suggestion, I'd take my good old time with this one, folks—it's going to be a spell before we see another. **ECM**



According to ECM, this game doesn't exist, because he doesn't believe in evolution; he thinks we were put on this planet by Andro-hyped Venusians.

Viewpoint Score	Developer - Sting	1 Player	ECM: Chocobo's mysterious
:90	Publisher - Ubi Soft	Available Now	rocket launcher?

R Review



Dreamcast







Flip the lid on my DC at any given time, and most likely you'll find a slightly worn copy of *Sega Rally 2* inside. It (like the upcoming *Ferrari F-355 Challenge*) is a car racing enthusiast's dream game, even with an inconsistent frame rate. Realism plays a major role in both titles, as they sport a hefty learning curve. However, realism is not an essential ingredient to a racing game. Case in point: *Speed Devils* by Ubi Soft—a game which takes itself about as seriously as Crystal Dynamics took the deadline to *Soul Reaver*.

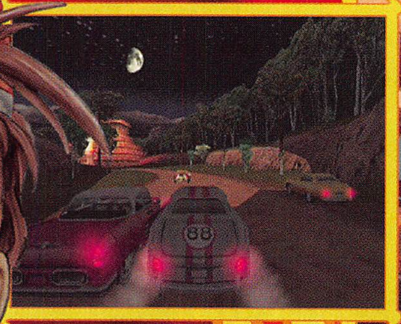
Unless we're talking about a blazing port of *Unreal Tournament* or *Half-Life*, I don't get too excited about PC ports. Games like *Suzuki Alstare Racing* and *Incoming* (for your sake, stay far, far away from these titles) have only strengthened my distaste for PC-to-DC ports. *Speed Devils*, on the other hand, plays and feels like it was originally developed for console. It boasts an impressive engine, tight control, and unique courses. And unlike most PC racers, leaves the hard-core sim elements smoldering in its wake.

Players start out by choosing either Arcade or Championship modes. Arcade allows for a wider selection of vehicles, ranging from old rides like T-Birds to a modern day Porsche. While in Championship Mode, players must prove their skills behind the wheel of a serious junker. Placing in the top three or busting through radar traps earns some serious green. If your budget allows, modifications can be purchased, vehicles can be bought and sold, and pink slips can be gambled away (nobody tell The Judge that!).

My only criticism of *Speed Devils* is that the gameplay becomes monotonous. Courses go on forever with little variation, and the overall layout of the levels is too similar. While you encounter a raging King Kong or disgruntled Mayans on certain stages, the excitement level is too low to have me unlocking all the stages. In a way, it's *Cruis'n USA* on the Dreamcast... throttle and nitros are your main concerns.

Speed Devils might have begun life as a PC game, but it's found its true calling as a DC title. Dreamcast owners looking forward to humorous racers like *Crazy Taxi* or *Super Runabout* would be well-served checking out *SD*. Sure, it can't quite compete with *Rally 2*... but what can?

Fury plans on renaming his DC "Mini PC"—the console which plays way too many PC ports!











SPEED DEVILS

REVIEW	FURY: Officer, the Devil made me do it... I swear!	Developer - Ubi Soft Publisher - Ubi Soft	2 Players Available Now	Viewpoint Score: 81



ZOMBIE REVENGE™





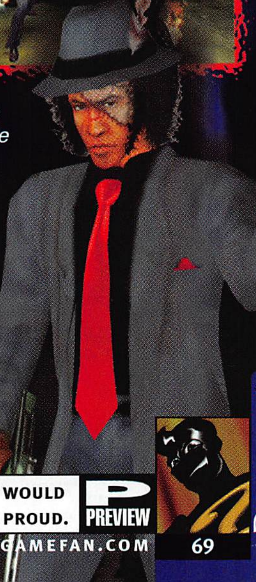
The original release date for *Zombie Revenge* was October 25 in Japan. Days before Halloween, it was going to be the perfect import to usher in a night of terror. But alas, in the world of video games, delays are inevitable. So it's yet another boring Halloween in the Valley for Fury—"Dood, like, can I have some candy please... fer shure!"

Zombie Revenge's latest Japanese release date is November 25, so by the time this issue hits the stands, your local import shop should be well stocked with Sega's gruesome arcade beat-'em-up. Luckily—patience not being one of my finer virtues—Sega was kind enough to send us a near-complete version of this *House of the Dead* side-story, and I haven't slept since.

If you read the preview in our October issue (with the blazing *Zombie Revenge* cover), you know how excited I am about this game. But you don't have to be a certified *HotD* freak to enjoy *ZR*; it appeals to any gamer fond of action and blood-soaked, carcass exploding, politician loving, violent gameplay.

Seeing as how the game looks pretty much complete (all levels, bad guys, and weapons are there), I'd wager that the delay was due to the many console-only extras which have yet to be implemented. Some of them were in our rev... the





versus mode, which lets players freely lay the smack down on each other (like the end of *Double Dragon*), and boss mode, which lets you take on the head honchos without small fry getting in the way. Other extras include a weapon-only and bare-knuckle mode. Plus, what game would be complete without a training room?

Having played through both the arcade game and now near-complete DC build, I can safely say that *ZR* is a perfect arcade translation. Though I heard ECM mumbling about a particular water effect not looking as dazzling as the arcade, I'm completely sold on the home rev. As annoying and frustrating as delays tend to be, I'm letting this one slide... Hopefully, with the extra time someone at Sega will suggest including the original *HotD* gun game as a super-secret extra... Hey, I can dream, can't I? F

Developer - Sega	1-2 Players	FURY: Voice-acting that would	P Preview
Publisher - Sega	Available Nov. Japan	do any chop-socky flick proud.	

a killer is coming, walking between worlds...

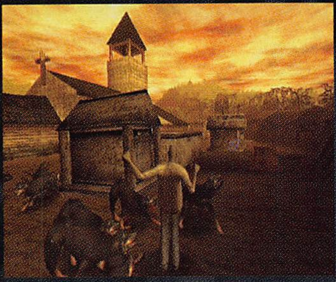
When *Shadowman* was first announced last year, I expected it to be Acclaim's next big thing. Considering the company's huge success with *Turok* and the fact that *Shadowman* possessed an extremely dark storyline (making *Silent Hill* look like *Marsupilami*... trust me, I know), I figured Acclaim had a major blockbuster on their hands. Surprisingly, the outcome couldn't have been further from my initial thoughts. It takes nerve to make a game that you know is only going to appeal to a small audience, and that's exactly what Acclaim did. They followed up the *Dinosaur Hunter*'s huge success with a title skewed towards a much older audience, and, as the ad campaign was fairly low key, planned for the game to sell via word of mouth. Going for something totally unique and pleasantly evil, Acclaim even kept the curse words intact. At all costs, keep little Timmy far, far away from *Shadowman*... if you don't want him to hear things like "I can see dead people."

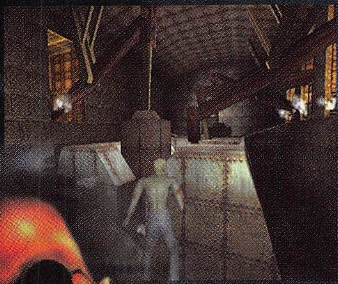
Truth be told, *Shadowman DC* is *Shadowman N64*, with the addition of cleaner, crisper textures and more impressive lighting effects. The disappointing thing is the PC version will probably look identical to the DC rev, if not better. Is it wrong to want more for your money than the obvious perks that come from porting N64 code to a DC powerplant? While I'm happy to be playing the best looking version of *Shadowman*, might I make a suggestion to the DC development team while the game is still relatively early in development? Why keep the blocky look of *Shadowman's* inhabitants (does Shadowman not need fingers?) when the DC is much better suited for creating life-like character models. Imagine *Shen Mue*-quality characters populating *Shadowman's* horror-filled environments.

One great DC-only feature is the ultra smooth frame-rate. No longer will the game appear to just chug along, hindered by the N64's memory issues. The DC port has flawless motion with no distinct slowdown problems, and pop-up looks to be entirely non-existent. Don't even get me started on the water effects... ripples look insanely real!

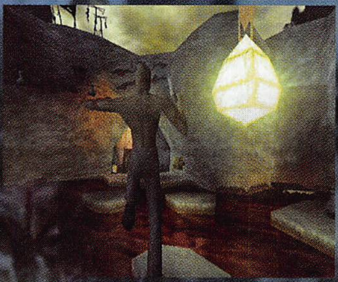
Hopefully mature games like *Shadowman* and the upcoming *Code Veronica* will usher in a new breed of DC games in America. Now if only Hideo Kojima would do a *Snatcher* or *Policenauts*-inspired game on DC... or *MGS* would be nice too! **F**

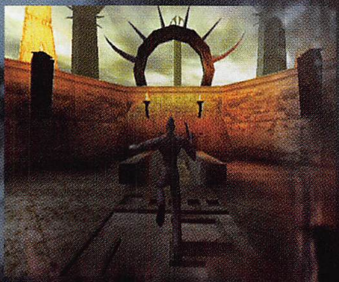










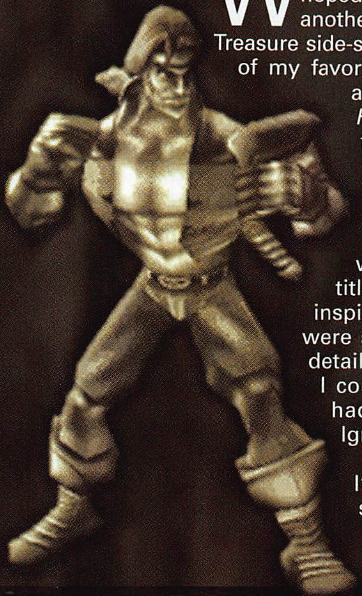




SHADOW MAN

sometimes, it takes a killer to stop a killer.

PREVIEW	FURY: Afraid of your own shadow? I don't blame you!	Developer - Iguana UK	1 Player
		Publisher - Acclaim	Available 1st Qtr.



When the Dreamcast was first announced, there were several games I'd hoped would receive a sequel or update. Obvious choices were another *Panzer Dragoon* game, a sequel to *NiGHTS*, a blazing Treasure side-scroller like *Guardian Heroes,* and of course, an update to one of my favorite Genesis games of all time... *Golden Axe*. Sonic Team appears to have their hands completely full with the upcoming *Phantasy Star Online*, Team Andromeda has recently re-formed, and Treasure is working on a port of their N64 shooter *Bangaio*. After witnessing Sega's TGS Dreamcast video, a *Golden Axe* update appears to be just wishful thinking... but could *Soul Fighter* possibly fill the void?

Toka, known for *Burning Road* on the PlayStation (a wanna-be *Daytona*), has now come forth with its first DC title. When I first laid eyes on Toka's *Golden Axe*-inspired *Soul Fighter,* I was stunned. The graphics were sharp and the character models were large and detailed, reminding me of the fighters in *Killer Instinct*. I couldn't understand why ECM claimed that *SF* had major issues... and then, I played it. Ignorance is most definitely bliss...

Since *SF* has recently been delayed, I'm hoping that the control receives a serious overhaul. While the game delivers graphically in all categories (especially weapon effects!), character movements remain painfully sluggish. With a nonstop barrage of enemies at hand, slicing and dicing becomes as tedious as sitting through Eggo's explanation of why *Chocobo Racing* deserves respect.















Each of *SF's* levels takes place in a large environment, and, like in *Streets of Rage*, the levels can't be cleared until all enemies are vanquished. A small meter at the bottom of the screen keeps track of your body count and lets you know how many baddies are still in need of your handiwork. Unfortunately, *SF* doesn't allow for the fluid movements found in a *Streets of Rage* or *Final Fight*. As enemies fill the screen, the lack of smooth movement becomes painfully obvious, but I'm hoping that the delay will see these problems solved.

If visuals alone were enough to sell a game (*SF* suffers from *Pen Pen*-itus), Toka's eye-candy-laden brawler would be one of the top-selling DC titles. Time will only tell if *SF* receives the proper improvements. If *Soul Fighter's* many issues are addressed, Toka has a chance to pull together a game that has loads of potential. **F**



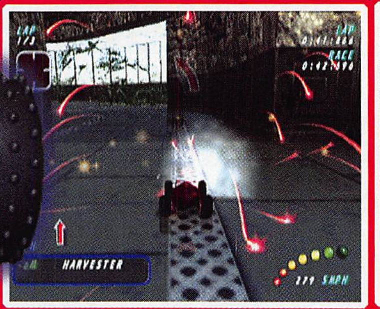


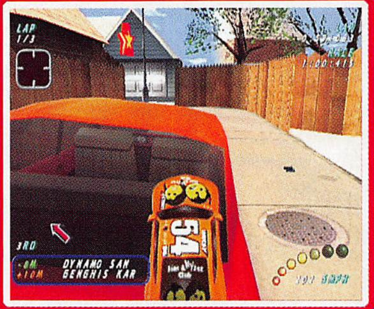
DEVELOPER - TOKA	1 PLAYER	FURY: BEAUTY IS ONLY SKIN DEEP.
PUBLISHER - MINDSCAPE	AVAILABLE NOW	

PREVIEW

RE-VOLT



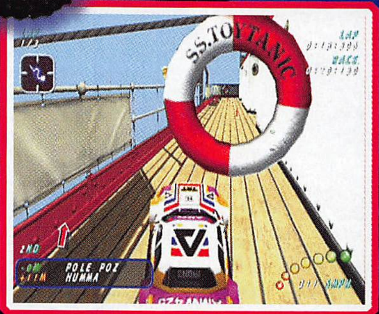




PlayStation, N64 and PC—*Re-Volt's* made its way to almost every major platform with varying degrees of success, but not much success overall. If the third time is not the charm then what does that make the fourth? Good, I pray. Throw out the Nintendo 64 game with its near-sighted vanishing point; disregard the PlayStation version and its chunky frame rate. It's a whole different game when a developer can use the SH-4 processor; a processor that can outperform the Pentium in floating point calculations.



The showdown will begin this winter when *Re-Volt* hits the streets (no pun intended). In one corner, we have the reigning *Re-Volt* champ, the CISC-driven PC. In the other corner is the challenger, the RISC-based Dreamcast. Which one of these two polygonal powerhouses will come out on top? It'll definitely be a close one. Play *Re-Volt* on a PC and it's a tiny bit sharper than the same game on a VGA-equipped Dreamcast. Where the Dreamcast does leap ahead of the PC is in control. As much fun as we make of the retarded DC controller, it does the job for four out of every five games, *Re-Volt* being one of the lucky four; *Marvel vs. Capcom* fitting into that 'fifth game' category. Another perk for the console owner is that no installation is required. No one really wants to de-frag a hard drive or configure a game; I know I don't.



I've owned quite a few R/C cars in my time (and broken even more), and *Re-Volt's* squirrelly control captures the essence of pocket rocket racing. An R/C car appears so tiny in *Re-Volt's* convincing world. Each car is to scale whether you're racing on the Toytanic or on Rooftops. A track editor will give budding game designers a chance to create the craziest of tracks. Once a custom-made track is complete, it can be saved onto a VMU—don't wanna lose that creative magic.

PC ports aren't usually a good thing, but if Acclaim can live up to the PC game, it'll be happy days again. I can't wait until Mad Katz or somebody else does up an R/C style controller for the DC—that'll be boss, especially if the game shapes up. **C**







PREVIEW	CERBERUS: I'M NOT TOTALLY REVOLTED...	DEVELOPER - ACCLAIM LONDON PUBLISHER - ACCLAIM	1-4 PLAYERS AVAILABLE WINTER

COMING SOON

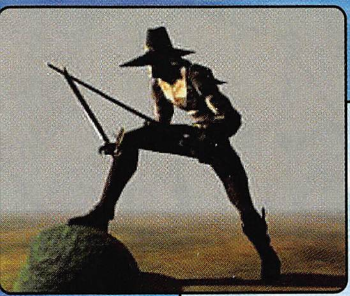
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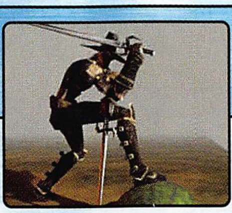






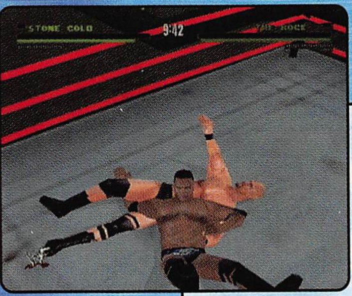
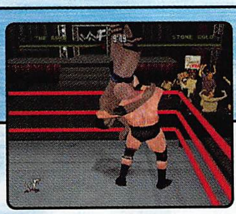
F-1 World Grand Prix (Video Systems) — The premiere F-1 racer for N64 gets a serious facelift and tummy tuck. Wait 'till you get your hands on this—real racing at its best.

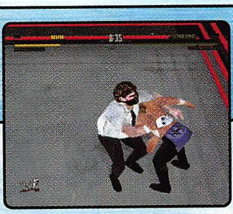
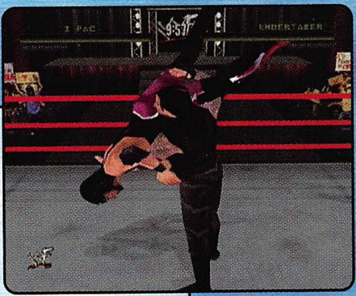






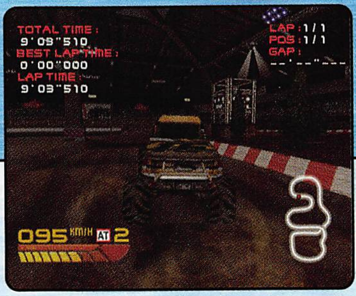
Chakan (Sega) — The Forever Man lives up to his title by making his return on the DC. It'll be the best of both worlds: a 2D-style adventure in a 3D realm. ECM's frothing already.

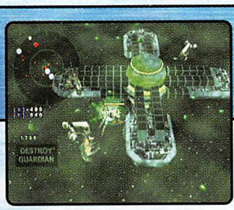



WWF Attitude (Acclaim) — Can you smell what Acclaim's cookin'? The Rock and crew make their debut Q1. Think you'll be ready for them, Jabroni?






4-Wheel Thunder (Midway) — More four-wheeling action from the people that brought us *Ironman Stewart's Off-Road*. Keep your fingers crossed for a 4-player mode.




Armada (Metro3D) — A top down console shooter on the Dreamcast with an RPG twist. Take control of an alien race and build experience and reputation as you battle it out in the furthest regions of space.

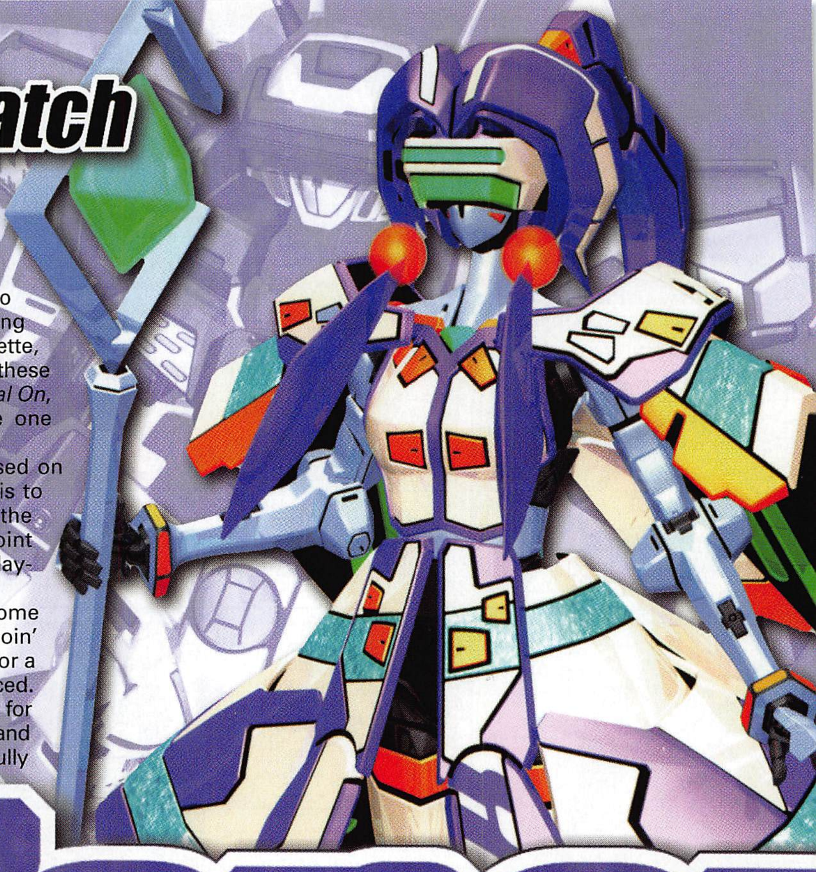
Dango's VOOT Watch

VOOT is right on target for its December 9th launch and everything is falling into place. As that fateful date draws nearer, details are slowly beginning to emerge. We've learned more about *VOOT*'s awesome Internet Battle System. According to inside sources, you'll be able to customize each Virtuaroid. These options include changing the name or number of each robot, modifying the color palette, and designing your own Team Emblem. While some of these ideas were first introduced with the Netlink version of *Virtual On*, the Team Emblem editing system is comparable to the one found in *Rage Racer*.

The Network will instate a 21-tiered ranking system based on points earned in battle, like XBAND. Currently, the plan is to give each player one point before the match. If one of the players "plug-pulls" and terminates the connection, a point will be deducted from that player's stats. The opposing player will receive points for the forfeit.

Good thing I've been saving up my vacation time. Come launch day of the *VOOT* network, this Japanese pastry's goin' AWOL. Also, keep your fingers, toes, or whatever crossed for a U.S. release of this game, because as yet, it's still unannounced.

Sadly, this will probably be the second-to-last *VOOT* Watch for everyone's favorite dango since the release date is nearing, and soon we'll be back with a full blown massive preview, hopefully with yours truly at the helm. So, import gamers, get ready for a December to remember. *VOOT* IS COMING!!!



Japan

Japan Now: UP-TO-THE-MINUTE!!!!
Sega Out-GT's GT?!

Hold on to your seats, racing fans—Sega has dropped a bomb in the form of Sega GT, an all-new racer set to go head-to-head with Sony's Gran Turismo 2000 at the PS2's launch in Japan this March. Why should you be excited? Because Sega, arguably, makes the best, most realistic racing games in the world (anybody that's played *Sega Touring Car* or *Ferrari F355* can attest to that). Better yet, this game is a Dreamcast exclusive and won't see the light of day in arcades first. Current industry banter is torn as to whether the game is running on its own, brand new engine, or a modified *F355* engine (our money's on the former). For now, we have this fresh spate of screens for you to get drooling over. Come next month, we blow this baby **wide** open.

Shen Mue Delayed... Again

On record to share the award for "Most Delayed Import Game" next to Enix's Dragon Quest 7, Shen Mue has been delayed again thought SoJ claims this to be the last delay of this game. Yu Suzuki's highly anticipated masterpiece (we hope) won't be out till April of 2000. While there is speculation of certain problems with the Free Battle System, the official word says it's taking them longer to fix all the bugs discovered the first time they changed the release date. All we can do is wait...longer.

Capcom versus Marvel versus SNK again

Word on the street is that *Marvel vs. Capcom 2* could be in Osaka as early as New Years. Details are scarce and the most important bit of information we know is that it's in the development process. As to what characters are in the mix, we only know one for sure—Wolverine. Well, that's still unconfirmed, but Capcom seems to enjoy leaving him in for the Thug Tactics, scrubby players. Hey, as long as we finally get to use Arthur, Mobi (*Sidearms*), Bionic Commando, and Dan... just kidding.

In other Capcom news, there's a certain cross-over series that everyone's been talking about recently. Japanese magazines as well as the official websites of Capcom and SNK in Japan have posted the same shots. What perplexes us is that these shots use recycled graphics. We're not talking a background or animation here and there; it's like Capcom and SNK have simply shared old assets and banged out a new title.

Virtua Striker 2 for Christmas!

While a certain online individual named Kodomo calls it "football" (he got kicked in the head too many times), Sega's phenomenal arcade soccer game, Virtua Striker 2, will be available in Japan on December 2nd. Known for its incredible motion captured characters and solid gameplay, it's not known whether Virtua Striker 2 will make it stateside or if Visual Concepts is working on a Sega Sports soccer game. But seeing how all the excellent soccer games for the Saturn came from Japan, let's hope for a US release date soon.









Tekken Tag Tournament PS2

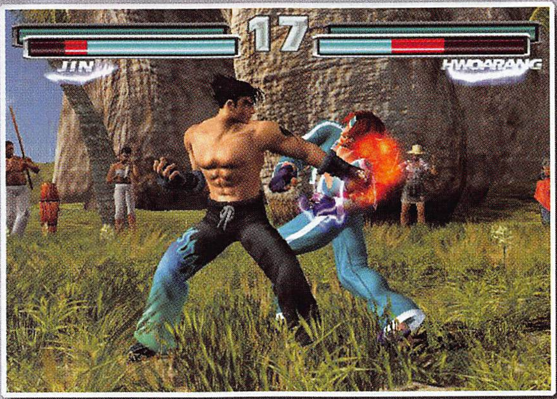
As if *Soul Calibur* on the Dreamcast wasn't impressive enough, the peeps at Namco show us what's up once again. With only three weeks of development time behind them, these recent *Tekken Tag Tournament* shots left everyone speechless. If these are really in-game graphics, then this could spell doom for Nintendo and Sega. Even more frightening, the PS2 hasn't fully realized its first generation software potential yet; it's just starting. What non-visual upgrades *TTT* will see on PS2 remain a secret. Knowing Namco, *TTT* will sport the usual modes: Arcade, Versus, Practice, and Team Battle. Maybe a real Tekken Force mode with 3D environments will make it in. No matter how all that extra stuff turns out, 90% of the players will be content with a better-looking game that has arcade-perfect gameplay.

NOW!

See the characters behind Jin Kazama and Hwoarang in Eddie's stage? According to Namco, those are indeed polygonal models, not 2D sprites. The grass on the ground is done similarly to *Soul Blade*, but with more polygons, sharper textures, and greater attention to detail.

Not impressed yet? Take a closer look at Paul as he nails Jun Kazama with his Deathfist. No seams out of place or blurry textures. Even Paul's denim jacket is super-detailed, down to the tattered pair of old jeans. Jun's shiny pumps aren't textured to look shiny—it's specular lighting. The subtle details on Jun's blouse are a silk-like material. The Chinese architecture in the background is polygonal as well. Mere words can't describe everything that's going on in this gorgeous picture.



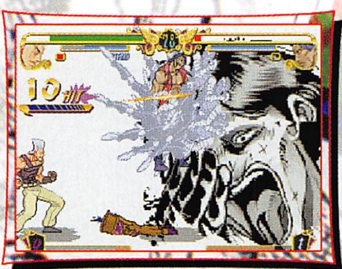




Taking place on what looks to be the same stage is a fierce battle between Hwoarang and Eddie Gordo. This is the only screenshot we've been able to criticize even minutely. Take a close look at Eddie's left heel. Is his heel coming through his bell bottoms? It sure is, but I think we'd all put up with an occasional sorting problem to play a game like this. Judging from Hwoarang's position, we think his gi may have independent physics. Ditto goes for the hair—see those locks swaying? The lighting and texture quality on both fighters represent the future—this isn't your dad's PlayStation. Can't you just taste the Godfist in the air? So when do we get some shots of Nina?

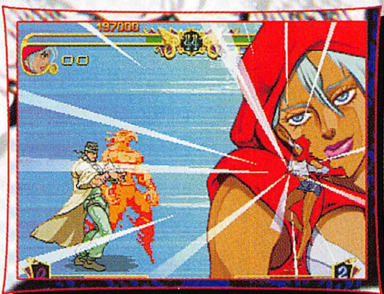
Imports

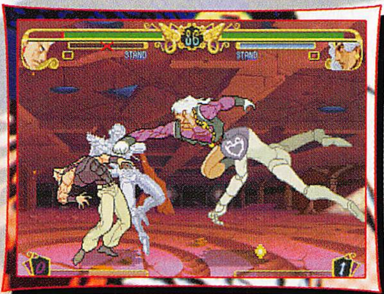
Reviews





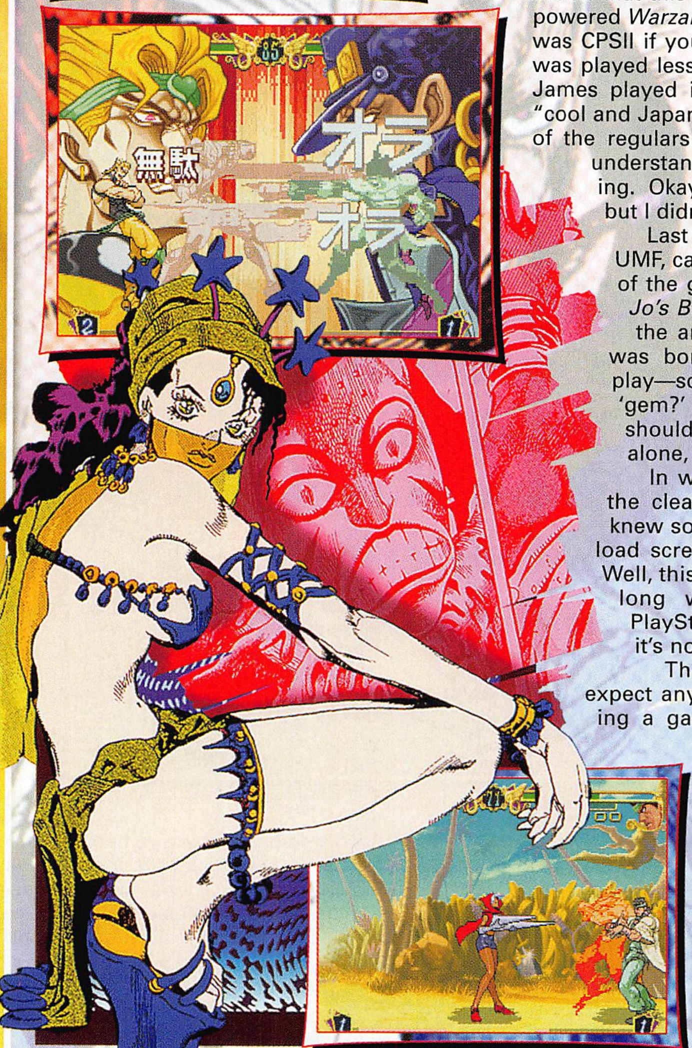






Ahh, Southern Hills Golfland... home away from home. While I can't exactly kick up my feet there—well, maybe on the benches outside—hanging out and playing *Rush* or *Street Fighter* against John or Raul, or watching Tokenboy embarrass himself at *Dance Dance Revolution* are everyday occurrences. Golfland's truly a one-of-a-kind place. What makes it a real treat for the socially-impaired arcade dweller is the obscene amount of test pieces it receives every month. Name a game, and more likely than not, it's been here first. Golfland even gets the rare ones like *Vampire Savior* and *Jo Jo's Venture*.

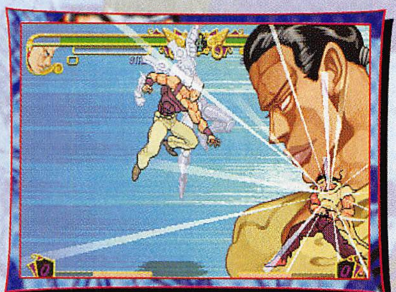
So the other day, I walked into Golfland and guess what was next to *Marvel vs. Capcom*... Yup, *Jo Jo's Venture* had somehow found its way to the main gaming area. Not sure what to expect, I dropped four pecks and start playing... Weird, unique, strange, unorthodox, odd, bizarre... all words that describe *Jo Jo's*... "not-impressed" would be another. Ignore the cartoon-quality animation and hardware scaling, and you're left with a middle-of-the-road fighter starring a cast of oddball characters from a little known *Shonen Jump* comic. The animation is quite nice, CPSIII and all, and the scaling is nifty. Get too far away from an opponent and the scene pans out; close-in again and it zooms back; but there's no other indication that this runs on the goliath 2D hardware that powered *Warzard: Red Earth* or *SFIII*. You'd swear this was CPSII if you saw it. In the end, though, *Jo Jo's* was played less than *Power Stone*. Actually, Arcade James played it, but he'll play anything he deems "cool and Japanesey". After watching him and some of the regulars play *Jo Jo's* at Golfland, I couldn't understand why they liked it or continued playing. Okay, some of the mini-games looked fun, but I didn't plan on telling them that.



Last week, in walked our newbie intern, UMF, carrying a bunch of import games. One of the games happened to be <cringe>... *Jo Jo's Bizarre Adventure*. No one had played the arcade game as much as I did—hey, I was bored and there was nothing else to play—so guess who got saddled with this 'gem?' A CPSIII-to-PlayStation conversion should be worth checking out for laughs alone, 'cuz you know it won't be pretty.

In went the pretty black CD, spinning in the clear-blue PS, and up came the logo I knew so well. After wading through a billion load screens, the game finally started, and... Well, this ain't no CPSIII, but Capcom's come a long way in pushing the 2D-impaired PlayStation to its limits. It's not *SFA3*, but it's not *Darkstalkers* either.

The control is tight, but I wouldn't expect anything less from Capcom. And playing a game without having to worry about



perpetually feeding a coin slot makes it a lot easier to look at a game with new eyes. That said, *Jo Jo's* isn't as bad as I once thought. It's just really weird; there's nothing else like it. The fighting system is incredibly unique, thanks to a feature called The Stand: pressing the "X" button calls forth a psychic teammate to aid in battle (if only Fury had a psychic teammate accompanying him all the time...). Both attributes and special moves change in Stand mode, and some truly cheap combos can be had as well—but that's not why I continued playing.







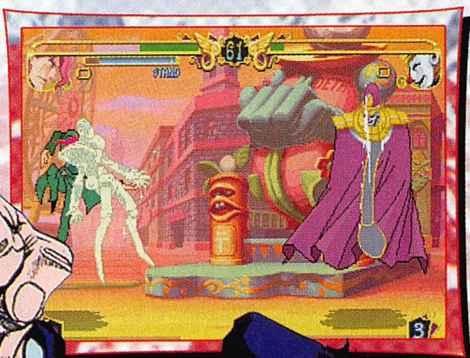
The Story Mode in *Jo Jo's* is unrivaled. Unlike other story modes, *Jo Jo's* lets you assume the role of almost every character, whether in a battle or mini-game. Capcom's gone all out to make this mode as entertaining as possible, and new mini-games are introduced as the story progresses. The variety is astounding; from start to finish, I saw a card game (poker), a shooter, a platform section, and a bunch of others. Each of these games shares nothing in common with the fighting game, other than the characters. Peculiar, yes... monotonous, no.





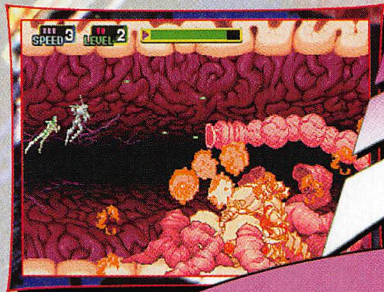
Still, with its trove of goodies, I don't think—wait, let me rephrase that—I don't know if *Jo Jo's* is for every Capcom fan. It's not a hard-core 2D fighter like *Alpha 3* or *Third Strike*; but it's not a platformer, shooter, or puzzle game. However, it is entertaining. Fury, Doctor J, and myself have logged close to a thousand man hours on this game.

But before running off to the nearest import shop, you might want to wait a second. According to Capcom, *Jo Jo's* has a flight path straight for the Dreamcast. With the DC's 2D power to burn, *Jo Jo's* will be a perfect translation—just look at *SFA3* and *Marvel vs. Capcom*—but then again... those weren't CPSIII titles.





Cerberus doesn't "get" all the references to artists like Steely Dan and Oingo Boingo. He'd rather listen to Vanilla Ice.



ジョジョの奇妙な冒険

Jo Jo's Venture

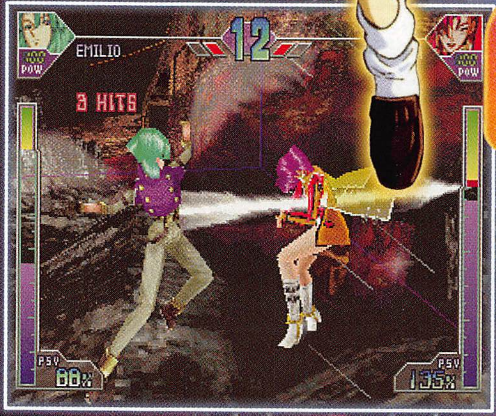


Viewpoint Score :87	Developer - Capcom	1-2 Players	Cerberus: K-Ci and Jo Jo's black-eyed pea adventure.
	Publisher - Capcom	Available Now	

R Review

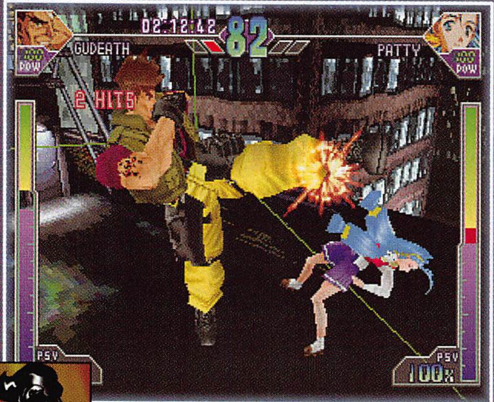


サイキックフォース2
PSYCHIC FORCE TWO

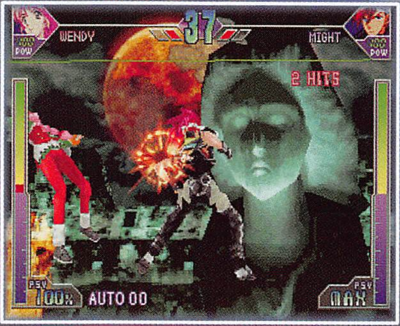


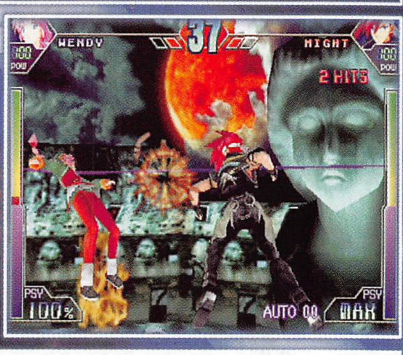
I once thought the fighting game genre would fast burn itself out. With the release of every sequel in the *Street Fighter* series (and every fighting game clone), I thought it was only a matter of time before we saw the genre keel over and expire. But I was wrong; and that's a good thing, because I happen to love fighters. Everything seemed settled... Capcom and SNK were kings of the 2D brawler; Namco and Sega ruled the 3D arena; and Midway... well someone had to preside over *Mortal Kombat* (it's a dirty job, but...). Developers hoping to break away from the norm (Square's *Tobal 2* and Xoom's *Zero Divide 2* spring to mind) were usually met with little to no fanfare. Which is why I never understood the success of the *Psychic Force* series in Japan.

The epitome of niche fighting games, the *Psychic Force* series' most recent incarnation was the popular *PF2012* on Dreamcast (voted the #1 arcade game by *Gamest* magazine in Japan). While *2012*'s graphics are impressive (the backgrounds and character models are to die for), the series has always been known for crisp visuals, awesome anime-inspired character design, and fantastic backgrounds. But *PF's* unique gameplay is what really sets it apart from the norm... aerial combat! Taito threw all laws of psychics out the window and gave players the ability to hover and fly about each arena.



Let's compare...





Hmm, which version of *Psychic Force* should I purchase? On one side you've got pretty, pixel free visuals and on the other, the PS.

FURY: I BELIEVE I CAN FLY... <ACK!>	DEVELOPER - TAITO	1-2 PLAYERS	VIEWPOINT SCORE :80
	PUBLISHER - TAITO	AVAILABLE NOW JAPAN	

Dreamcast








Contrary to the endless mid-air combat of the original *Dragon Ball Z* on PS, *PF2012* has stages in the shape of a large cube outlined with colored lines. These stages also have weak spots, so finishing an opponent with a super will sometimes send them flying through an entire 'wall' of an arena... sort of like the time I sent Cerberus crashing through the front window—deadline was WHEN, you said? The bottom line is *PF2*'s simply a modified version of *2012*. There are a number of featured bonuses like additional characters, a brand new animated intro, and several secondary modes of play such as Survival and PSY-Expand Mode. But the question is, if you own both a DC and a PS and are looking to buy a *Psychic Force* game, which do you buy: *PF2* or *2012*? For me, it's as simple as comparing the screenshots at the bottom of this review. Sure the PS graphics look nice, even downright beautiful (*Heart of Darkness'* visuals still freak me out), but compared to the DC version, which flawlessly replicates Taito's awesome Wolf arcade hardware, the choice is obvious. Either way, *PF* fans will have to check in with their local import shop because god only knows when and if Taito plans on releasing *PF2* in the US.



After years of brutal *SF* matches, I've become more than accustomed to Capcom-style gameplay. With each new fighter that comes out, I immediately search through the standard repertoire of dragon punch, hurricane kick, and fireball motions... but to no avail in *PF*... The play mechanics are pretty basic and consist mainly of attacking opponents with colorful projectiles from afar. When characters do come into close proximity, the camera zooms in tight for a bit of close-quarter combat (of course this mainly consists of repeatedly tapping either attack button)... Basic moves for a very basic fighter. Supers are quite spectacular and require charging the psy meter at the bottom of the screen. The interesting thing is that as players lose life, they actually gain a higher percentage on their psy meter, allowing for more devastating supers. Again, while *PF* might not rely heavily on combos (though a variety are included), it's really the mid-air combat and heavily stylized look of the game that creates the novelty.

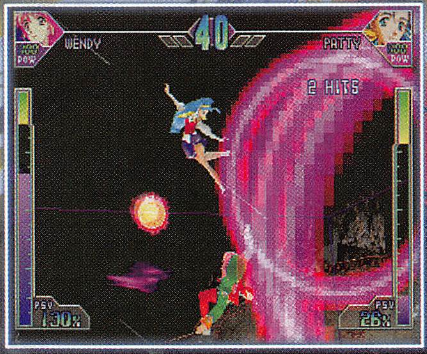


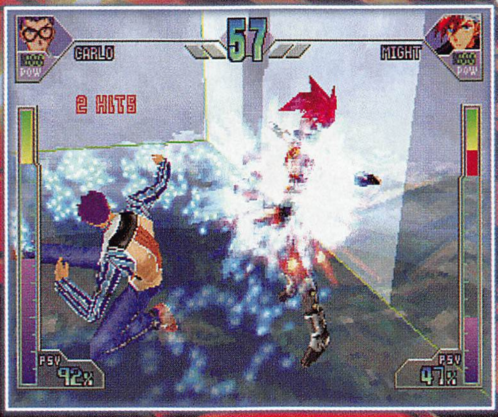


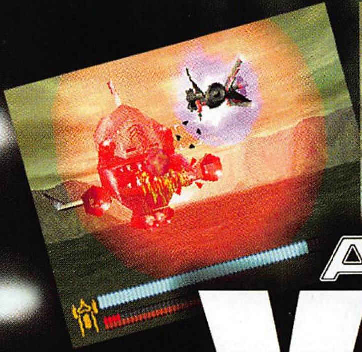
Although Acclaim released the first *PF* in the U.S., its poor sales might prevent this strange fighter from ever seeing future release in the States. I think American gamers are pretty open-minded (except when it came to backing *Skullmonkeys*) and would certainly get a kick out of *PF's* heavily anime-style look. However, while I can see *2012* on DC (with its sheer visual presentation) coming here before PF2 on PS, I wouldn't be surprised if both titles remained stranded forever in the land of the rising sun...

Fury's parents believe their son suffers from a very different type of psychic force...







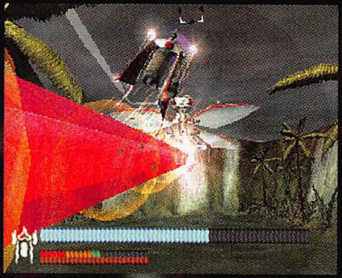





ASTRO TROOPER VANARK



Imagine the amount of PlayStation games at your local EB or Software Etc. Pretty scary, huh? Now imagine that amount times ten, because in Japan, PS releases are a weekly event. Most come and go without leaving any impact; not even half of those games will ever see the light of day here. In the case of games like *Tobal 2* and the recently released *Astro Trooper Vanark*, that's a real shame. If *Vanark* does make it to the U.S., I'd be more than surprised because shooters on the PS are usually released with little more than a dull thud. RPG's, Fighters, Survival/Horror, Sports... to ECM's dismay, that's exactly what the majority of gamers want. If only there was a real interest in the genre, maybe Working Designs would have released *Radiant Silvergun* for domestic PS rather than *Silhouette Mirage*... I can hear ECM's teeth grinding from here.



From what I can make out (*Vanark* is a bit text heavy), the story plays out similar to the films *Armageddon* and *Deep Impact*. Gigantic asteroids are on a direct path with the third planet from the sun (that's Earth for those of you who failed Astronomy). A last-ditch attempt to destroy the huge rocks has failed miserably and the outcome is cataclysmic... and would ya believe I just invested in one of those nifty timeshares <sigh>. Strange things apparently happen when most of mankind is obliterated, cause huge laser-wielding creatures have risen from the rubble. Your mission is to cut them down with the latest in technology and from what I can guess, restore some degree of order (when is the goal ever anything but...?).



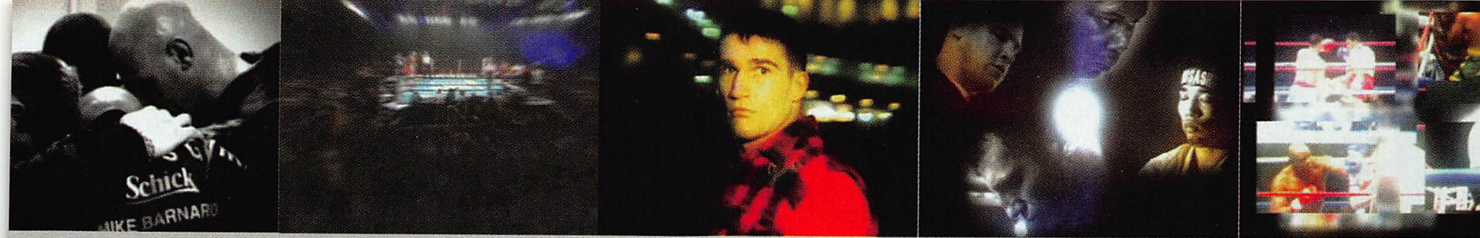
In between missions, your character can roam the huge ship you're aboard (even has a fully-stocked bar, much to The Judge's satisfaction) on foot (with *RE*-style control) and interact with other crewmates. There's even a gratuitous shower scene to satisfy most perverted Dangos. As a brief public service announcement, this game has a large amount of text, so if you're considering importing it, prepare to walk around a bit in the dark, though talking to most characters and doing a little exploring will trigger your next mission.

While visually *Vanark* does not come off as impressive as the ultra-hot *Omega Boost*, the gameplay is more suited to my style of shooters (I'll save *Panzer*-style targeting for a *Panzer* game, thank you). Had the developers rendered the textures in hi-res, perhaps the outcome would have been more favorable. Like *StarFox*, you're on semi-restricted rails and the action flows towards you at an almost non-stop rate. The enemies range from gigantic worms to robotic fish and beyond, reminding me of the enemy design in *Darius*. Strange, but definitely a plus in *Vanark*.

If you don't mind playing the game entirely on the D-pad, and have a few extra bucks to blow at your local import shop, I'd suggest checking out *Vanark*. It might not compare to PS shooter greats like *Philosoma* but the genre is a dying breed (cue ECM's teeth-gnashing again) and this may be one of the last chances you get to experience it on PS.

Fury recently found one of the 17 pair of glasses he's lost around the GF offices. Sixteen to go, Fury!

REVIEW — Fury: Asteroids headed toward Earth!! Can't we just redirect Reagan's Star Wars program?	Developer - Bit Town Inc. Publisher - Asmik Ace	1 Player Available Now Japan	Viewpoint Score: 72















Coming in, I was expecting this game to be horrible. The number of people interested in a K1 Kick-boxing game in America has gotta be smaller than those interested in horse-racing, R/C stunt copters, or underwater basket-weaving (hey, don't knock Sega's *UBW2K* until you try it!). So after losing the bet with Cerberus, I ended up with the task of reviewing *K1 Grand Prix '99*. The last kick-boxing game I'd seen, *K-1 Arena Fighters*, wasn't very exciting.

But the second I popped in *K199*, I was impressed. An adrenaline-pumpin' CG intro had me juiced for some heel to forehead contact. Of course, I was still wary, because I'd been suckered before by the "awesome CG intro that's cooler than the game" scenario in the past (most recently in SNK's *Fatal Fury Wild Ambition*). Then the match started and lo and behold... the game still exuded quality.

The character models are some of the best to ever grace the PlayStation. There's a whopping 19 kick-boxers to choose from, hailing from 10 different countries. But even more impressive than the graphics was the control—surprisingly responsive. The characters didn't move like they'd been drinking too heavily the night before, which is what I was expecting. Instead, *K1*'s moves are swift and deadly.

So there I am, dukin' it out with my first challenger... He's reeling, and I've got him bouncing off the ropes. Goin' in for the finish, I rush in... to the wrong side of a size 15 roundhouse kick to the head.

FIGHTING ILLUSION
K-1 GRAND PRIX '99







Next thing I know, the ref says "10" and my fighter's still on the ground lookin' at the pretty colors. What the...?

Well, it's realistic that a spinning roundhouse kick to the jaw won't feel too good. But that's my only gripe with the game—the realism hurts the gameplay balance. One hit K.O.'s in a fighting game are never fun, no matter which side you're on. Also, blocking some of the deadlier moves in *K199* drains a lot of stamina from your meter... so repeated blocking of a lethal move could still lead to you eating canvas. The sidestep doesn't move as far as it should, and you're still vulnerable to spinning moves like a roundhouse kick. If only this game had better play balance, it would score in the 90s for sure.

Still, as it is, *K1GP99* is an impressive, high-quality kick-boxing title which surprised a lot of people here, including myself. Let's hope that a U.S. publisher like THQ picks up this latest chapter in the *K-1* series, because it's much better than *K-1 Arena Fighters*. **E**



Viewpoint Score: 84	Developer - Xing	1-2 Players	EGGO: Let's get
	Publisher - Xing	Available Now Japan	ready to... kickbox?

R REVIEW

I t's late at night nearing an impending editorial deadline, and I've come to a startling realization—I don't like games with mechs, at least not from the 32-bit era and beyond. There's been *many* games recently starring large, mechanical robots, but most of them haven't done anything for me: *Frame Gride, Armored Core, Xenogears, Gundam Side Story 0079, Super Robot Wars Complete Box, Evangelion 64, Macross VF-X2, MechWarrior 3, Zero Divide*... and, you guessed it, *Front Mission Alternative* (there's a million more I'm not mentioning due to space constraints). The only semi-recent mech games I've enjoyed are *Virtual On, Bangaio,* and *Omega Boost* (although those last two could just as easily feature spaceships or dragons instead of mechs, so I hesitate calling them "mech games"). What hurts even more is I'm a fan of Saturday morning cartoons like *Robotech, Voltron,* and *Transformers.*









Long-time readers are probably thinking you've got this review nailed. One of those 'I hate X-type games. Man, I really hate X-type games. Hey, wait! This X-type game is pretty cool!' reviews, right? Well... you're wrong. Even after playing *Front Mission 3,* my distaste for modern day mech games continues.

This turn-based strategy series started out on Super Famicom with *Front Mission 1* and *2.* Square followed these up with *Front Mission Second* and *Front Mission Alternative* on PlayStation. Yet despite the series' success in Japan, we've never seen any of these games released over here.

Overall, *FM3's* not a bad game. The graphics are good, albeit a bit 'grey' for my taste. The sounds are satisfactorily clunky, more than adequate for a game like this. Loading time is minimal, and the turn-based gameplay requires strategy, as opposed to the "turn 'em loose" combat of *FMA.* For all you Square CG-lovers, there's high quality FMV; plus, the game offers Dual Shock support when mechs blow up (ooh!!!). There's also the option for the pilot to jump out of the mech and run around in the middle of the firefight (not recommended, but high comedy value)! You can also dislodge enemy pilots from their mechs and take over their 'rides.' One of the best features is the ability to skip the story sequences to go straight to the combat. The menus are fully in Japanese, but the game's simple enough that you don't need to be fluent to play.

front mission 3
フロントミッション サード

So what is it I don't like about *Front Mission 3*? Primarily the fact that it's a *Front Mission* game. This has been a series which I've never gotten into. Considering the staggering number of games coming out in Japan this Christmas, there are better choices to spend your money on. Instead of *Front Mission X,* I'd much rather see a true sequel to *Final Fantasy Tactics,* and I'm not the only one. Considering none of the *FM* games has come Stateside yet and Square EA has a ton of RPGs already announced for 2000, don't count on seeing *Front Mission 3* any time soon. If you're an *FM* fan, then it's import time. The gameplay is solid... it's just not for me.







Eggo still wishes to renew his membership with the Square sellout club, despite his blasphemous dislike for Front Mission, Bushido Blade, *and* Racing Lagoon.



R REVIEW	EGGO: MISSION ABORT!	DEVELOPER - SQUARESOFT / PUBLISHER - SQUARESOFT	1 PLAYER / AVAILABLE NOW JAPAN	VIEWPOINT SCORE: 78





Plus Plumb

Puzzle me this: Why is it that so few girls play video games? Because there's not many games that appeal to them out there. I don't want to spread any stereotypes, but for the most part, female gamers prefer RPGs and puzzle games. Sure, you get the occasional freak of nature who can frag in *GoldenEye*, super combo in *Street Fighter*, and powerslide in *Daytona*... but a true female sausage is harder to find than the Holy Grail. Well, it doesn't help that good puzzle games are a dying breed these days (*Bust-a-Move* and *Tetris* can only go so far). So in search of a fun puzzle game other than *Worms: Armageddon*, I turned to the Land of the Rising Sun. What was this? A Dreamcast offering from Takuyo? Hmm, let's delve deeper, shall we?

The object of *Plus Plumb* is to weigh down your opponent's scale with enough colored balls that it dips below the 'unhealthy' line at the bottom of the screen. This game's "twist," which sets it apart from the rest of the 'colored ball' puzzle games, is you're fighting over the weight of the balls. Pull off a nasty, multi-hitting chain combo starting with reds and your opponent's red balls instantly weigh a lot more. Within seconds, he'll be frantically scrambling to clear all the reds from his side.

Every color has a paired color to go with it. Purple and white, red and blue, or yellow and green. If you get a purple, you can switch it to white, then back to purple (but none of the other colors). Connect three or more of the same color vertically and/or horizontally, and those balls disappear, turning neighboring balls their alternate color (leading to chain combos). There's also a meter at the bottom which swings to either side, depending on who's doing more combos. When the needle points your way, a super is earned which can: dump more weight on the enemy's side, prevent him from changing colors, or give him random ball colors for a short time.

Hard to believe, but *PP* may be too complicated for its own good. There's a lot to keep track of between setting up complex chains, dealing with supers, and watching for 'hot potato,' heavy colors. This has got to be the hardest puzzle game to set up a combo for, because the switching of ball colors in combos is unpredictable and difficult to plan for. Try as I might, I couldn't get into *Plus Plumb*. Most likely, it'll stay in Japan, never to see light of day here... So if the concept sounds intriguing, try to rent it from a nearby import store. But don't rush off to spend your hard-earned cash owning this one before seeing it.

Eggo was caught saying things like "My greens got FAT! NOO!!!" when playing this game.

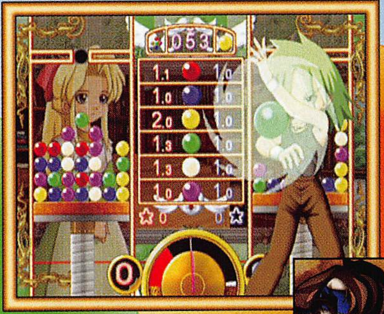












Viewpoint Score :79	Developer - Takuyo	1-2 Players	Eggo: Yellow and blue make... red?
	Publisher - Takuyo	Available Now Japan	

R Review

COMING SOON

COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON COMING SOON

import

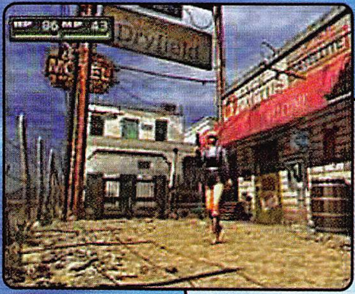
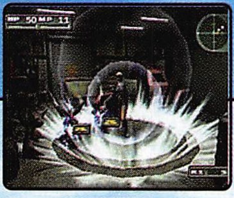







import

Giga Wing (Capcom) — Capcom and shooters go way back (*1941* anybody?), and *Giga Wing* is another shooter done in the traditional vertical style. ECM might not be freaking out over this one, but it's a shooter nonetheless. Hurray!




Parasite Eve II (Square) — For readers suffering from revolting mitochondria withdrawal, there's *Parasite Eve II*. No longer a rookie cop, Aya Brea is back to protect New York. After the Stateside success of the original, it'd be foolish for Square EA to pass on this sequel.







Rent-A-Hero (Sega) — Everyone's favorite Hero for hire leaps off the Mega Drive and heads for planet Dreamcast. Though a Stateside release is uncertain (the original *RaH* never appeared here), Sega would be crazy to pass on this classic.







Silent Bomber (Bandai) — *Bomberman* meets *Metal Gear Solid* in this explosive PlayStation adventure. A US release is likely so hold tight to that C4 and get ready for the Countdown.







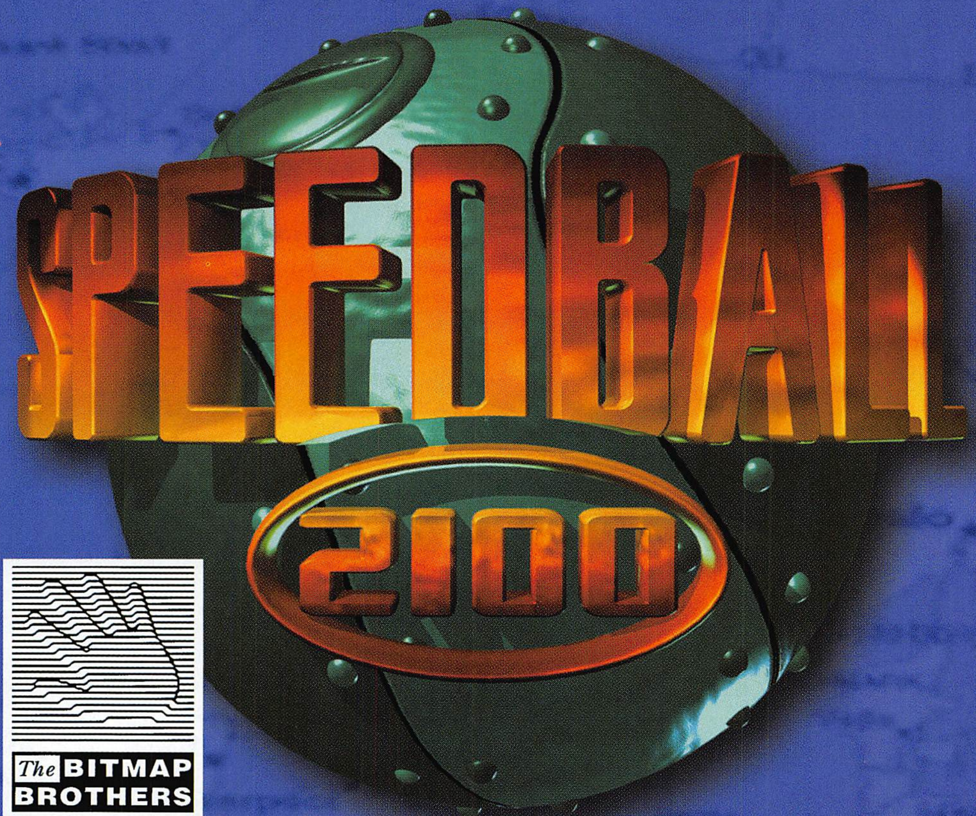
Animastar (AKI) — *Monster Rancher* on the DC... sort of. These furry combatants would rather compete in the mile run then battle it out in some arena. Start praying to the gaming gods for a US release on this one.



This is no time to second guess yourself.
Killer soundtrack
including music performed by
Blink 182, Ministry, Fear Factory, H2O, Voodoo Glow Skulls, Joi, Lagwagon, Ten Foot Pole, Pulley, Face to Face
PlayStation
Featuring Music By:
Blink 182
Ministry
Fear Factory
H2O
Face to Face
Voodoo Glow Skulls
Pulley
Lagwagon
Ten Foot Pole
Joi
EVERYONE
E
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
MTV MUSIC TELEVISION
SPORTS
SNOWBOARDING
radical entertainment
THQ
MTV MUSIC TELEVISION
SPORTS
2 Player Split Screen Mode
5 Different Events
Exclusive Create-A-Park Feature
7 Unique Lifestyle Riders
Hundreds Of Trick Combos
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PlayStation

Europa

The Bitmap Brothers. One of Europe's most prolific development studios, is the topic of this month's Europa. Creators of** Speedball, Gods **and** Soldiers of Fortune **(that each saw wide-spread release in America) along with a host of other inredible titles, has officially embarked on the next generation of console titles with** Speedball 2100 **an update of the venerable, you guessed it, Speedball. So sit back, and let Riot whisk you away to the old world...now if only he'd remember to send us some shots, <sigh>.



The BITMAP BROTHERS

The Bitmap Brothers
The Originators

Stats:
Founded in 1987

Xenon—released January 1988
Speedball—released November 1988
Xenon 2 Megablast—released August 1989
Speedball 2 Brutal Deluxe—released November 1988
Cadaver—released August 1990
Cadaver The Payoff—released 1991
Gods—released March 1991
Magic Pockets—released October 1991
The Chaos Engine (*Soldiers Of Fortune* in the USA)—released March 1993
Z—released in 1994

The Bitmap Brothers were without a doubt "The Developers" during the late '80s and early '90s when the Amiga was in its prime. While they weren't household names in the U.S.—the Amiga never really established a presence here and the Genesis conversions weren't successful—they nonetheless set standards with each game they released, and the Bitmaps seemed able to tackle any genre with ease. *Speedball* and its sequel were the ultimate in futuristic sports titles, while *The Chaos Engine* and *Xenon* series were the pinnacle of frothing shoot-'em-up action. *Xenon* and its sequel are probably the most difficult shooters ever; just getting past the second level in *Xenon* was an achievement in and of itself—since the game was as difficult as trying to please ECM.

Don't forget *Cadaver,* an isometric, off-beat adventure set in medieval times. There were hundreds of rooms to explore, and plenty of magic at your fingertips, waiting to be unleashed upon the nearest baddie. Also, there was an add-on disk which contained extra missions and a continuing storyline.

Each game had the trademark graphics style known as... err, metallic sheen. Back then, Bitmap graphic artist Dan Malone worked wonders with the Amiga's limited 32-color palette, creating rich and detailed game environments. The Bitmap Brothers became the first developers to achieve celebrity status while maintaining a constant output of awesome games.

Not only were their games reminiscent of their Japanese counterparts, with immaculate design and a high immersion factor, they also pioneered the use of licensed music in games way before Psygnosis came up with *Wipeout* and its star-studded soundtrack. *Xenon 2: Megablast* had a remix of *Bomb The Bass'* legendary party anthem, and *Betty Boo* was snapped up for the platform game *Gods* (set in ancient Greece). I remember this game not for the great gameplay, but for the way the main character turned around sloooowly when you walked in another direction, leaving you open to attacks from behind... which I guess is realistic.

After staying on top for so long, things inevitably took a turn for the worse... not drastically wrong, but it appeared that the Brothers, who previously could do no wrong, began to falter. The first signs were in the game *Magic Pockets*, which was met with mixed reception. The game was designed by Sean Griffiths, who quit the Bitmaps after this game and went on to create—take a deep breath—*Rise of the Robots*, which was so bad, it's near-legendary. *Magic Pockets* was a hit, but it lacked the tight gameplay of the previous titles.

The Chaos Engine followed, and the Bitmaps were back in form with this awesome top-down shooting game which had stupendous graphics at the time, but by then the Amiga was a dying breed, thanks to widespread piracy and amazingly bad management. It was only a matter of time before the machine disappeared completely.

After deciding to support the fast-growing PC platform, the Bitmaps embarked on their biggest project yet... *Z*, a real-time strategy game that could've fathered the current RTS genre,

if everything had gone as planned... but that rarely happens in this industry. The lead programmer of *Z* left for Westwood and went on to work on a game called *Command & Conquer*, which had a lot of the ideas and features that were supposed to be in *Z*.

Incidentally, *Z* was one of the first games to use a lot of rendered FMV to convey a story, but even that didn't help the game any. A half-hearted *PlayStation* version followed. But this was all years ago, so now it's time to find out what's going on with the Bros...

Turns out the team has undergone some restructuring, and much of the time has been spent creating a state-of-the-art 3D engine which is going to be used in the forthcoming *Z2*. Of more interest, however, is *Speedball 2100,* developed exclusively for PlayStation. It's been a long time coming, and while it can be seen as a "We're back!" title of sorts for the Bitmaps, there's no doubt that this is what people have been waiting for ever since *Brutal Deluxe* was put through its paces.

The original *Speedball* game is still fondly remembered for its maddeningly addictive gameplay and the pioneering of ultra-violent thug tactics to win matches. These matches took place in small arenas surrounded by metal barriers, and the object was to toss a small metallic ball through the opponent's goal. This wasn't as easy as it sounded, as opponents performed tackles that even the Mighty Duck's defense would have trouble dealing with. Of course, there were also other underhanded tactics available to the player—such as bribing the ref to give you more leeway.

The sequel, *Brutal Deluxe*, had this great sample of a vendor yelling "iceeee-creaaaam" before each match that I will never forget. *BD* maintained the same atmosphere, violence, and futuristic formula, but built on the experience by having an extensive league mode and more ways to customize players and teams.

So after a 10 year wait (who says I'm not patient?), a third game is finally on its way to the PlayStation, complete with glorious 3D graphics—at least that's what I'm hopin'. At ECTS, Empire announced that they had snapped up *Speedball 2100,* which should be released before summer 2000. While the graphics will be in 3D, much of the gameplay is going to be the same as before, which is just as well, as there was hardly anything wrong with it in the first place.

Interview with the Bitmap Brothers' Mike Montgomery

Speedball 2100

Q: The Bitmap Brothers have been away from the limelight for a while... what's goin' on?
A: Quite an interesting question... the Bitmap Brothers released *Z* back in 1996... people have to realize that developing games takes years and we are a small developer so, yes, we have been out of the public eye for a few years. We've been working on various titles for the past 3-4 years... but we're still here and have always been here.



The Bitmap Brothers are back!

Q: Why has it taken so long to come up with a new *Speedball* game?
A: People have been badgering me for a few years to do *Speedball 2* for the PlayStation, but it wasn't something I was completely happy with at the time. I think it was a case of wanting to do a really good job with it... and needing the right team to do it, but we were concentrating on making PC games.

Pete Tattersall (Studio Manager of Bitmap Brothers (North)) approached me some time ago with the idea of doing a PlayStation version of *Speedball.* The London studio was concentrating its efforts on our follow up to *Z* (*Z2*), so I decided to open a studio in the North of England (managed by Pete) to create *Speedball 2100.* I have an excellent working relationship with Pete, who is very experienced in the games industry. And his passion for *Speedball,* combined with his vision for *Speedball 2100*—which is exactly how I imagined it—gave me the confidence that the game will meet and exceed even our high standards.

Q: Are all the original Bitmap Brothers still at the company?
A: The BB's were formed by myself, Eric Matthews, and Steve Kelly. All three of us are still at the company. I now own the company, and the other guys work for me. Mark Coleman, whose first game was *Speedball*, is still with us. We have a few people who've been with us for many years—John Phillips has been here for seven, my PA, Abby Hains, has been here for about the same amount of time. People tend to stay at the BB, besides the new guys who just came aboard with *Z2* and *Speedball 2100.* Once people join us, they tend to stay. Most people have been here more than three or four years.

Q: Is Dan Malone still with the company?
A: Unfortunately, Dan Malone left the Bitmap Brothers four years ago to further his career elsewhere in the industry. It was a pleasure to have him on the team, as he is one of the most talented artists I have worked with in the industry, and although it was a shame to see him go, we still remain in contact to this day.

Q: Will there be any serious changes made to the gameplay?
A: I think one of the most important things for *S2100* is the switch from a 2D to 3D perspective, and I think this will enhance the gameplay and bring it in line with the modern standards of 3D games. With the gameplay, we have some ideas we'd like to implement. But *Speedball 2's* an extremely playable game, and there's a case for "if it ain't broke, don't fix it"... however we will be doing some minor changes to the gameplay.

Q: As *Speedball 2100* is being created by another Bitmap team, will the Bitmap metal graphic style™ be lost?
A: Lose the trademark Bitmap metal graphical style? You must be joking! It has to stay—it wouldn't be *Speedball* if we replaced it.

Q: What sort of pedigree does *SB2100's* team have?
A: This is the first time they've all worked together, but as individuals they have titles like *Sentinel, Assault, Football Manager,* and *Zoop* under their belts.

Q: Will there be multi-player support using the multi-tap?
A: Most definitely!! The original *Speedball 2* let you play with 2 players. I think what we'll try and do with *Speedball 2100* is go for 2 player and probably 4.

Q: Will it still be possible to bribe judges/players?
A: That was a feature in *Speedball 1* which wasn't in *Speedball 2*—it's something we're looking at, so maybe.

Q: The Bitmaps pioneered the use of music from big name artists...
A: We are actively looking for a band to use in *Speedball 2100.* It's a case of finding the right band.

Q : Finally, what do you think of the PlayStation 2?
A: The Bitmap Brothers would love to support it... We won't have games ready for launch, and I think it would be a mistake for us to finish something by launch. We hope to have something ready by the second generation of games... possibly *Speedball.*

When I first saw the PlayStation 2 at the GDC in San Jose, I was looking at all this wonderful hardware and I thought, "Wow, this is going to cost a fortune for us to develop [for] and we'd need tremendous teams to work on games... but now a few months later... I think that if there's enough middleware, then yes I do think we can keep the development team sizes in reasonable numbers, and that's very important. If you have teams with hundreds of people, then creativity is lost. If you have smaller teams, the individuals are much more creative and that produces better games.

GameFan would like to thank:
Mike Montgomery & Steve Whittle
at the Bitmap Brothers
Alison Beasley
Georgia Corbella at Empire

GameFan Sports

I am totally fried. Look at all of the games I had to play this issue! It would have been one thing if they were all stellar (and even then it would've been a bit much) but unfortunately for this hombre, most of them just plain sucked. It is refreshing to see such a wide cross section of sports genres represented in these pages, but that hardly numbs the pain of sitting through half of them.

The most anticipated game of the Christmas season has managed to deliver. *NBA 2K* is exactly what basketball fans needed... and just in time. I don't know about you, but the lull between new products on the Dreamcast was beginning to tick me off. If it wasn't for *EverSmack*, I probably would have had to go back and recreationally play... ack... a 32-bit system. Now if the peeps at Sega could just pony up a copy of *NHL 2K*, then I would be a happy camper.

Which brings me to hockey, the greatest of all sports. And guess what? I have season seats to the Kings, baby! Twelve rows back from the home ice blue line. Then there is the new GameFan luxury box at the Staples Center where I get to casually watch any event I care to from the Kings and Lakers to the Clippers and Sparks (ok, so I'm not going to any Sparks games).

Another team that plays in the Staples Center is the Avengers, an arena football team. You may ask yourself, why would El Niño bother to bring that up? I bring it up because Midway is going to be releasing an arena football title for the Dreamcast (did you like that little segue?). Running on the *Blitz* engine, expect hi-octane gameplay that mirrors the real thing. Actually, arena football plays a lot like *NFL Blitz*, so it shouldn't be much of a stretch... With Kurt Warner scorching secondaries this year, in his NFL debut, this will certainly help give the sport a bit of a profile boost, raising it somewhere above tractor pulls and cock fighting.

Also in the works are two new FOX Sports titles. While basketball left much to be desired, their hockey sim showed much promise and leads me to believe that their upcoming football and baseball projects will be more than your garden variety genre titles.

Next issue I will have more on both of these titles as well as Midway's arena football title and other Dreamcast sports games. Now where the hell are my PlayStation 2 games, huh? —*El Niño*





NBA 2K
Dreamcast
Sega

True, there were a full dozen things that annoyed me about this game (and it has been docked accordingly) but all nit-picking aside, *NBA 2K* remains the best basketball sim I have ever played. I can't wait to to see where they go with this title for next year. Hopefully they will, at the very least, allow you to save your coaching options.

G 10 · C 8 · P 9 · M 8 · O 5 — **94**

Yes, another sport's Viewpoint by yours truly only because <gasp> I actually like this game. It's definitely more arcadey than I expected which makes it ace in my book. Blazing visuals and solid hoops action (though this is coming from a dyed-in-the-wool old school NBA Jam guy) make this the b-ball game to beat.

G 9 · C 9 · P 8 · M 7 · O 7 — **94**



NBA Showtime
Dreamcast
Midway

An arcade perfect port of a perfect arcade game. Being able to play this game in my own home now allows me plenty of time to practice for when I need to face Eggo in the GameFan arcade lounge. The fact that he has been beating me, as of late, is disturbing... I will find a way to win with my beloved Celtics against his Hawks!

G 9 · C 9 · P 8 · M 7 · O 6 — **89**

One of the most popular arcade games comes home to the Dreamcast perfectly. While I utterly detest the "rubberband AI" of Showtime, this game was made for multiple players slamming and trash talking. Great animation and a pretty cool edit mode makes this a defnite buy if you've got pals to dunk on.

G 9 · C 8 · P 7 · M 7 · O 6 — **88**



NBA Jam 2000
Nintendo 64
Acclaim

To the left are two of the coolest basketball games ever to grace the home console. The title above me, on the other hand, rates as one of the worst games I have ever played (and I played *Superman*). The laundry list of what is wrong with this title is so long that if you shredded it you could throw a New York ticker tape parade.

G 4 · C 4 · P 4 · M 2 · O 1 — **28**

ECM gets *NBA 2K*, Dango gets *NBA Showtime*, and I get *NBA Jam*... that's what I get for showing up to the party late. I love *Showtime*, but *Jam 2000* suffers from abysmal collision detection, shoddy AI, and graphics not even a mother would love. This game's so bad, it's comical; yes, it's in *Superman's* league.

G 3 · C 4 · P 5 · M 4 · O 6 — **43**



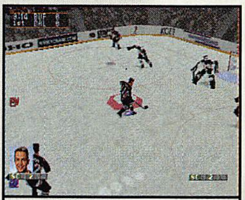
Int'l. Track & Field 2000
PlayStation
Konami

IT&F 2000 continues to carry the torch for this heralded series. Nagano aside, all of these titles have been excellent button mashers and if that sort of thing is your cup of tea, then you should be in heaven with this game. A very weak one player experience, IT&F is one hot multiplayer game. It is all about women's swimming...

G 8 · C 8 · P 7 · M 6 · O 5 — **81**

I recall hanging out at the frat house and having a riot of a time with 3 other guys playing the 400m hurdles when the very first T & F came out on the PS. T & F 2000 brings back all the memories with new events and slightly enhanced graphics. Still the game is not meant to be played by yourself, so it's a better rental than a buy.

G 8 · C 8 · P 5 · M 6 · O 6 — **77**



Blades Of Steel 2000
PlayStation
Konami

Ok Konami, it's time to stop making hockey games or take this license in a new direction. Can't compete with the sims, can't compete with the arcade titles, can't compete for the consumer dollar; this game offers hockey fans nothing resembling a good time. Take my advice and hire Terry O'Reilly to work on the next one.

G 5 · C 6 · P 6 · M 4 · O 5 — **58**

This is disgusting. Blades of Steel on the NES, while not a sim, was ultra addicting. There's no getting around the fact that Blades of Steel 2000 is a dog shouldn't be published. If you don't want to take on the FaceOff's of the world, fine, but make something that's actually playable. Port the NES game over, it's better.

G 6 · C 4 · P 5 · M 5 · O 3 — **60**



Fisherman's Bait 2
PlayStation
Konami

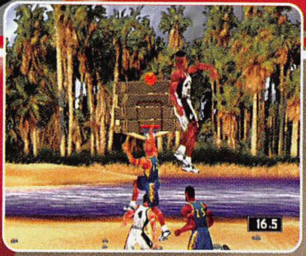
What was one of the lamest games of last year has surprisingly one of the most fun fishing games of this year. Why? Because they scrapped the original and stuck in a port of an arcade title; smart move. *Big Ol' Bass* is the perfect solution for anyone who isn't able to play *Sega Bass Fishing*. The highlight of Konami's sports line-up this year.

G 8 · C 8 · P 8 · M 7 · O 7 — **84**

I've been hooked to fishing games since Get Bass first appeared in arcade, sad but true. Here's an idea Konami, make every other game in your line-up this good and people might take you seriously. I'm in there with El Nino; can't play Get Bass? This is the closest thing on the PlayStation. I think I've got something!

G 8 · C 7 · P 08 · M 6 · O 8 — **80**

NBA Showtime







Dreamcast | Review

Developer: Midway | Available: Now
Publisher: Midway | # of Players: 1-4

Others may nominate *Blitz* as Midway's crowning achievement in arcade sports titles, but I consider *NBA Showtime* to be the king of the crop. Better than every basketball coin-op before it, *NBA Showtime* is collective son of all that came before, incorporating every shining aspect of its parents and polishing them to a high sheen.

While I recoiled in horror at the PlayStation preview, I was sentenced to play, such terrors have no shadows to lurk in, on the Dreamcast. With the mighty power of Sega's new machine, *NBA Showtime* can enjoy the benefits of arcade perfection.



All of the things that made the arcade game such an exciting experience are present in this version... and here you get to keep your quarters! While this guarantees the perfect arcade experience, there are obvious problems. Since the game was designed for quarter crunching, no attention was paid to long-term single player replay. Like many Midway titles, *Showtime*'s Achilles Heel is its one player mode... very, very shallow.

Then there is multi-player mode—and *Showtime* is as good a multiplayer experience as you can get. Whether working together to get team fire or going head-to-head in a ferocious smack talk fest, *Showtime* is the perfect dorm room activity. Create yourself a player and beef up his stats through competition. He may be feeble at first, but after about 20 victories he'll be the man!

If you are looking for a frenetic multiplayer experience, *Showtime* is for you. The action is repetitive and the game may lack depth, but there is nothing sweeter than giving your friend the smack-down. Another super title for the Dreamcast. **EN**

Sports Viewpoints Continued



NBA Live 2000
PlayStation
EA Sports

Another year, another *Live*... another exemplary basketball sim. Like most EA franchises each year brings little more than an update of the past year. For the most part this remains true here. There is the addition of the one-on-one mode, 50 Greatest Players license and new player models but past that, expect the same (great) *Live*.

G 8 | C 8 | P 9 | M 7 | O 6 | **89**

Do you really need me to tell you this is still the best basketball game on PS? *Live* speaks for itself, and the competition just quakes in fear. I prefer the faster-paced, arcadey action of *NBA Showtime*, but *Live* has always been an adequate substitute for PS hoop-heads. What's with those new player models though? Ugh!

G 7 | C 8 | P 8 | M 7 | O 6 | **87**



NBA In the Zone 2000
Nintendo 64
Konami

I have to admit that it is much better than last year's debacle, but it still does not have the graphics, control or AI to compete with the big boys. As with *Blades Of Steel*, Konami needs to reassess where it wants to go with this license because it will always take a backseat to *Live* and *Shootout*. How about *Double Dribble* for the PS2 or DC?

G 7 | C 7 | P 7 | M 4 | O 4 | **70**

Fact is that I don't particularly enjoy B-ball games. They've gotta be spot-on for my hyper-critical eyes. Fact is that NBA in the Zone 2000 is far from spot-on. Once again, El Nino's right, where's our PS Double Dribble: Tournament Edition? Gimme some of that and quick, maybe then will I forgive Konami for this tripe.

G 6 | C 6 | P 7 | M 2 | O 3 | **60**



Top Gear Rally 2
Nintendo 64
Kemco

Another lackluster Nintendo racing sim... ho hum. Yeah the graphics are solid; yeah the car physics are realistic; yeah, there are enough tracks to make for some good variety. Only problem is that this game has personality and lacks even a shred of originality... something that is desperately needed in this glutted genre.

G 7 | C 7 | P 6 | M 5 | O 4 | **68**

Bottom line, the N64 doesn't need another homogenized racer. With decent control, physics, and graphics *TGR2* is definitely one of the better racers of the season, but that doesn't say much when the competition is just as blah. Today, N64 racers require personality to stand-out, and that's why *TGR2* merely blends into the cluttered shelves.

G 7 | C 7 | P 5 | M 5 | O 5 | **69**



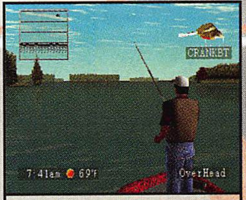
Supercross Circuit 2000
PlayStation
989 Studios

I will refrain from taking any pot shots at the actual sport here- I have done that already. Supercross Circuit is running on a solid engine, touting nice control and some smooth gameplay. Only problem is that this game is extremely shallow, offering little incentive to make this game a worthy purchase. Purely a rental title.

G 7 | C 8 | P 7 | M 5 | O 6 | **75**

OK, no, I'm not a fan of the sport - deal with it. However, it's a fun little motorcycle game with very fast graphics and some wicked jumps. I'm not gonna comment on the accuracy of the physics model and how it compares to the real thing, but it's fun. Certainly better than those other motocross 'sims.' Fans buy, the rest rent.

G 7 | C 7 | P 7 | M 7 | O 6 | **79**



Black Bass & Blue Marlin
PlayStation
HotB

Hot-B doesn't release enough games to afford to put out a sub par title. Unfortunately for those of us who have eagerly awaited another Hot-B fishing sim, there will be a fair amount of disappointment with *BB&BM*. While the bass fishing part is enjoyable (if a bit bland), the marlin mode sucks. Pray for a more creative follow-up.

G 6 | C 7 | P 6 | M 6 | O 4 | **65**

Aarrgghh! What happened here? The once king of armchair fishing is out for the holidays--must be Bermuda. Another example of reverse progress. Explain how an old SNES game can play and feel better than one that appears on a system that is technically more advanced? Take Fisherman's Bait and throw this one back.

G 5 | C 7 | P 4 | M 7 | O 5 | **67**

NBA 2K

Dreamcast

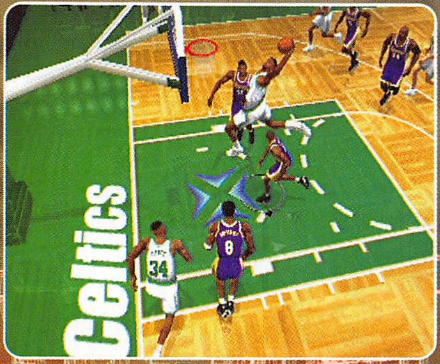
Developer: Visual Concepts **Available: Now**
Publisher: Sega **# of Players: 1-4**

R Review

The follow-up to the 800lb gorilla, *NFL2K*, *NBA2K* has some Lanier-sized shoes to fill. A bad title now would certainly raise some eyebrows and questions as to whether Visual Concepts was nothing more than a one hit wonder, right in between the likes of Slade and Animotion; yikes. Thankfully this is not the case. *NBA2K*, while not as flawless as its football counterpart, manages to turn in what is arguably the best basketball sim to date.

Using the same engine as *NFL2K* guarantees a couple of things. One is that the graphics are gorgeous. Not only do the players move more lifelike than in any hoops game before it, they actually look like the players... from a distance as much as up close! Each player has his real-life visage textured right onto the model, made even more realistic by the blinking and moving eyes and changing facial expressions... spooky. The other thing you can count on is unbelievable speed at which this game runs. Running at 60fps with no slow down, *NBA2K* looks as graceful as a ballet.

There is nowhere near enough room for me to talk about all that is right about this title. The AI is brilliant, the stats are deep and the myriad of moves that a player can pull off make for some of the most exciting gaming ever seen. The control is almost perfect (we will get to the "almost" part in a minute) resulting in precision gameplay attained only with the help of the aforementioned beast of an engine, allowing the extensive motion capture to take place without bogging down the flow of the game.



Never one to pull any punches, I am going to tell you what is wrong with *NBA2K*. While I now love this game, let me say that the first hour I played it I *loathed* it. Many of you, too, will have extreme feelings of annoyance with *NBA2K* when you first pick it up. Stick with it, though, because the following problems all become trivial once you begin to get comfortable with the game.

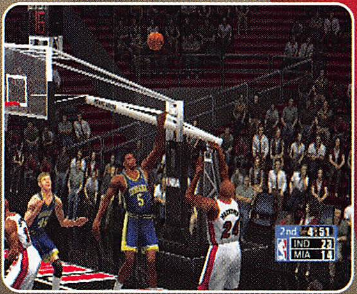
The biggest problem is the passing: it outright sucks. The crappy camera angle selection leaves you playing from perspectives that make the already sloppy passing even more tedious. I can't even begin to tell you how many times I threw to the wrong player (or out of bounds) because of this. Would have been a crippling blow if not for the fact that icon passing is in there. Each position is designated by a button, so once you learn which is which, you'll never throw a non-icon pass again (unless you are weak sauce). Problem solved.

Also annoying and quite careless is the inability to save your coaching options during season play! Each game, after the tip-off, you have to pause and then adjust all your options. Absolutely one of the most careless mistakes I've seen in a game to date. As equally lame is the inability to customize your controls. There are different control set-ups to choose from, but they are all preset and they all suck. The Y button was always meant to be jump... always.

Also on the annoying list is memory card management (a season uses the whole card), the inability to get around defenders on a fast break (total bull) and a mid-air throwing animation that will haunt everyone who purchases this game.

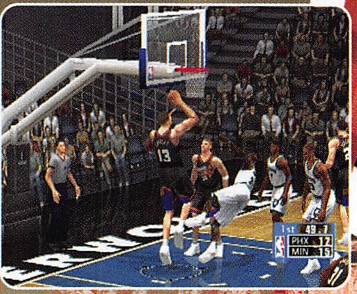
A lotta negativity at the end of this review, but take it with a grain of salt. As I said, after playing for awhile you will grow to really love this game. It certainly tops my list of greatest basketball sims ever... and it should top yours. Visual Concepts has followed up *NFL2K* with another outstanding title... now where is my hockey!!! **EN**











Black Bass & Blue Marlin







PlayStation | Review | Developer: Hot B | Publisher: Hot B | Available: Now | # of Players: 1

Sigh, I had such high hopes for this game. But alas, it was not to be. All of my reminiscing on the glory days of *Super Black Bass* must remain just that: reminiscing. Hot B's newest venture into the world of fishing, while having several bright spots, fails to capture the sport.

The bass fishing part of *Black Bass and Blue Marlin* is enjoyable. You get to drive your boat around the many lakes, trying out different lures, fishing from different perspectives and doing your best to coax those lunkers outta their mud beds. The musical accompaniment to the fight is a hilarious '70s piece that sounds like it was stolen from an episode of *Starsky and Hutch*.



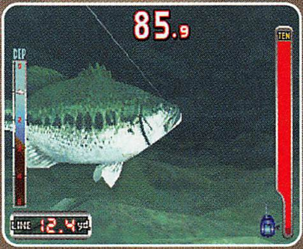
While enjoyable, it was far from impressive, though. The graphics are as good as they could have been, the control was twitchy (what, no analog?) and the lack of drama during the fish fight makes you wonder if fishing really is too boring to bother with.

Bigger is not necessarily better and that is the first thing that comes to mind when playing the marlin fishing mode. I had high expectations, envisioning epic battles with marlins and other deep sea denizens. So there I was, driving my boat around, trolling with lures that I remember from my days of blue fishing with my dad on Cape Cod, and guess what? I didn't catch squat. "Follow the birds" the game would say. Yeah, I followed the damn birds and I still didn't find anything. Maybe I was missing a fundamental part of the process but no console game should be that tedious.

Black Bass and Blue Marlin is a tepid experience. If you like fishing titles, then the bass portion of the game will be worth checking out, but the marlin fishing is lame and the overall quality of the product is not up to snuff with other titles of this ilk, like *Fisherman's Bait 2*. **EN**

Fisherman's Bait 2







PlayStation | Review | Developer: Konami | Publisher: Konami | Available: Now | # of Players: 1

What was one of the least spectacular games of my past year, *Fisherman's Bait* was why people think fishing games suck. Who'd have thought that *Fisherman's Bait 2: Big Ol' Bass*, would have turned out to be so fun? I guess I can loosen the noose around my neck now...

Big Ol' Bass is an arcade fishing game that has the kind of control and energy to make it not only a good playing game, but an exciting one as well. Don't expect to find anything in this title that hasn't been seen before. You have the bass tournament, numerous types of lures and various lakes stocked with all your favorite kinds of freshwater fish.



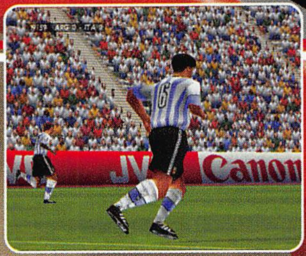
What sets *Big Ol' Bass* apart from other titles of recent memory is its graphics and fishing mechanics. The only bright spot in the first *Fisherman's Bait* was its use of both analog sticks. Add this to some great looks and enjoyable underwater action shots of your battling fish, and you have a pretty good Sunday afternoon.

The game's biggest potential problem is its arcade set-up. The whole speedy time limit is a total pain in the butt. We aren't crunching quarters so there is no need to speed us through. There are those that like this style of gameplay and to them I say *bon appetit*. The rest of us need to make the decision as to whether this hinders the game. The only other problem is the lack of freedom of movement. Unlike *Bass Landing* and other titles, you can't freely putt around the lake in your boat. The fishing spots are predetermined and this eliminates the fun of finding your own special fishing hole.

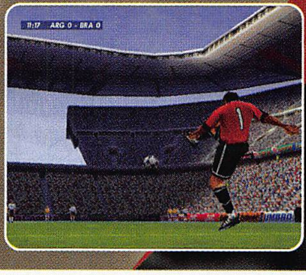
These two complaints aside, I have to say that Big Ol' Bass: Fisherman's Bait 2 is a really enjoyable fishing experience. Even those not into this genre are sure to have fun trying to hook a lunker. **EN**

Striker Pro 2000

P Preview | Developer: Rage | Publisher: Infogrames | Available: Feb. | # of Players: 1-4







More soccer... Entitled *UEFA Striker* in Europe, this Rage title will be hitting our shores as *Striker Pro 2000*, another in a growing list of soccer sims, hitting the Dreamcast (sigh, and no AYSO title yet) in the next six months. I won't pretend to be overly thrilled with this title because, after being spoiled by graphic marvels like *NFL 2K* and *NBA 2K*, it is hard to get pumped about a sports title that seems only too happy to be satisfied with just par for the course.

The UEFA Cup is a tournament pitting the winners of the various European leagues, annually (this year's winner was the Manchester United). Since this won't mean much to your average American (or Latin American, for that matter), Rage has added a compliment of national club teams as well as MLS soccer squads. Unfortunately, none of these teams (the MLS teams, for starters) will have the real-life players due to a lack of licenses.

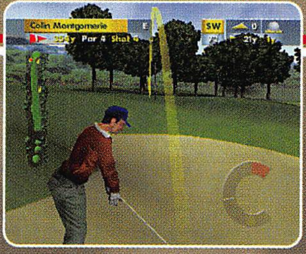
While I am unimpressed with the game's graphics, that is not to say that they won't be pleasing to the eye; even your most average Dreamcast titles have superb looks. The sound, though, definitely leaves something to be desired with sub-par commentary. The European release of this game looms, so no changes will be made to the current voice-over, but hopefully some effort is made to make more fluid commentary available for the domestic release.

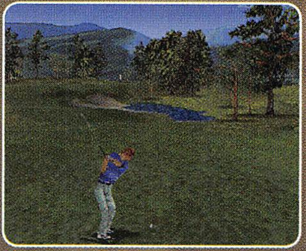
The above quibbles aside, *Striker Pro 2000* plays quite well and will be a title worth checking out. Whether it has the legs to stand up to *Virtua Striker* is a whole different matter. Only time will tell... **EN**

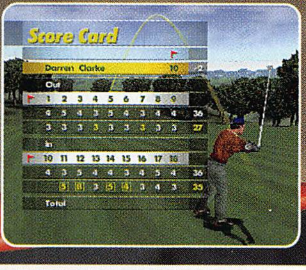


PGA European Tour

P Preview | Developer: Gremlin | Publisher: Infograme | Available: Feb. | # of Players: 1-4







Three years, three different publishers... and somehow the game isn't getting any better. When this game was *VR Golf*, it was a wonderful PlayStation golf sim, with a good engine and some great gameplay. So what happened? The sophomore opus just plain sucked and this most recent installment, now entitled *PGA European Tour*, doesn't look like it has licked whatever gremlins got into the gear works.

While it is still too early to finalize my opinions of this title, it is clear that it still hasn't gotten to the level it had been with *VR Golf*. The engine sputters like an early '80s Corolla, the texture mapping is grainy and the colors make *Quake* look like a Fourth of July display. I had complimented the original title for its use of greens, on the courses, but this just isn't the same.

Game mechanics, which were always this title's strong point, remain intact. The swing meter, ease of shooting and putting make playing enjoyable. The ability to pick up the pad, as a novice, and shoot a round makes this a very user-friendly title, as well. Until they optimize the course loading, though, these features will be hard pressed to float the game.

PGA European Tour will include 60 pros from past and present to hit the links with. Unfortunate for all, Nick Faldo is one of them... The commentary will be provided by BBC staples Peter Allis and Alex Ray. There are 6 courses to choose from, including Druid's Glen, Ireland; Hanbury Manor, England; and the K Club, site of the 2005 Ryder Cup (that is unless the Euros are still mad about the U.S. team's final hole celebration this year, and boycott. We know how long those Europeans hold a grudge...).

With a bit of clean-up work, *PGA:ET* could be a solid golf sim. Whether PS owners will be paying attention any more is another question, entirely. **EN**



Blades of Steel 2000

PlayStation | R Review | Developer: Konami | Publisher: Konami | Available: Now | # of Players: 1-8

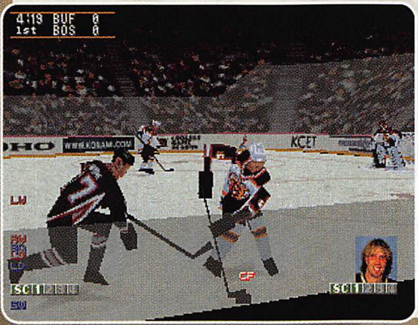






I give up on this series. It is clear that Konami has no idea in what direction to take this franchise and as a result, it has stumbled and fallen. An early classic, *Blades of Steel* took a long, unhealthy hiatus and has never recovered the glory.

The original had speed, control and merciless pummeling. Turn the clock forward and stare at *Blades of Steel 2000* and witness slow gameplay, average control and a complete lack of pummeling. Sure, there is fighting, but where is the blood and guts that I want? I know, if I went back and looked at the original, the fighting was pretty tame, but for the times it was great because there was nothing to compare it to. There was a mystique. Instead of playing that angle up in the newer versions, the game has gone the other way, trying to compete with the big boys in sim hockey; big mistake. By attaching NHL licensing to the game, it has hamstrung itself. No huge fights, no blood and no excitement.

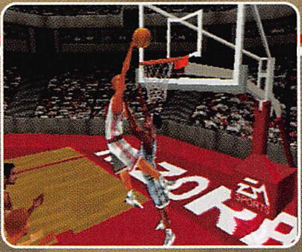


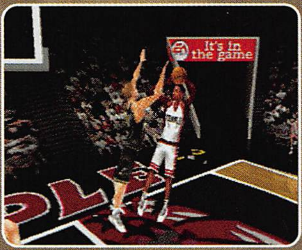
While the graphics are better than last year's version (dig those sweet passing animations), the gameplay is busted and the AI is laughable. These hockey players follow around the puck like a group of seven year olds playing soccer—you know the image. Even the overtime is done incorrectly, with it being a 5-on-5 contest instead of the new 4-on-4; very sloppy.

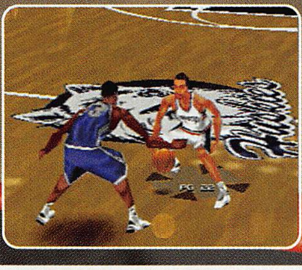
Avoid this game at all costs. Stuck in the no man's land between sims like *NHL 2000* and arcade fare like *Open Ice*, *Blades Of Steel* gets run down. Please either kill the series or make it an unrelenting slug-fest with goal scoring. If they want licenses, get an endorsement of some players like Tie Domi and Terry O'Reilly. Now THAT would be a great game. **EN**

March Madness 2000

PlayStation | P Preview | Developer: Black Ops | Publisher: EA Sports | Available: Dec. | # of Players: 1-8

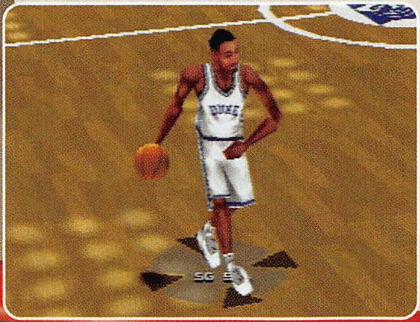






Last year's *March Madness* was a fabulous hoops title, delivering a great gaming experience. Solid graphics, great gameplay and more teams than I would ever get a chance to play, *Madness 99* needed very little improvement. So why is another developer tackling it this year?

Whenever I see the name Black Ops I get a little nervous. This studio can be completely hit or miss, making cool titles like *Treasures of the Deep* and then going on to make such drivel as *Warpath*. Seeing them tackle a sports game makes me even more leery...



While still only an alpha, it looks as though there foray into the world of college basketball will turn out okay. Although I try to avoid ribbing my beloved EA Sports, sometimes it is hard not to tease them as EA Ports. They were guilty of it in the days of 16-bit and, while much better about it, are in danger of becoming just that again. Not because they are lazy, but because the limits of the PlayStation have been reached (the only notable breakthrough is this year's *FIFA*, a monument to brilliant gaming).

Yes, you can walk away from this preview thinking port because, while the player models look different, there will be very little in this year's version to warrant another purchase. Expect updated rosters, an expanded Dynasty Mode, more coaching options and strategies, and a smattering of new player animations. Will any of this impact the final product too much? Probably not. Remember, however, that *March Madness 99* was a damn good game, so it is a pretty sure bet that this will be too. **EN**







Quarter Crunchers

PREHISTORIC ISLE 2

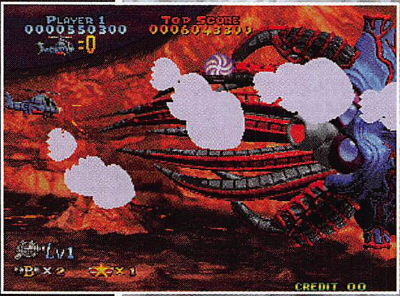
As I continue the one-man-against-the-world tour of '99 (in honor of shooters, of course), it has come to my attention that even in the Land of the Rising Sun this once great genre has become a lot less prolific in recent years. No surprise, considering the rapid demise of 2D and arcade gaming (can anyone else believe that? Sure, there's always going to be another *Strikers* game, another Raizing blast-fest, and the rare Capcom shmup (although, after playing *Giga Wing*, I think maybe they should leave it to the big boys, <shudder>)). For the most part, though, this entire genre is going the way of the Vectrex. However, even as permanent midnight descends on this once proud beast, there's still the occasional surprise to be had. In this case, it's SNK/Yumekobo's *Prehistoric Isle 2* (they're the developers behind the blazingly amazing, uh, *Blazing Star* on Neo Geo), a game that came out of nowhere at the recent AMOA show and gives a little hope that maybe the genre isn't completely dead this side of the Pacific.

With a pedigree that features the engine of *Blazing Star*, I was more than a little excited to see *Prehistoric Isle 2* crop up in SNK's stable of NeoGeo titles. What does it all mean for you? Approximately six levels of horizontally scrolling shooter action completely displayed with rendered sprites.

> **"...even in the Land of the Rising Sun, this once great genre has become a lot less prolific in recent years..."**

Instead of taking to the sky in a super-charged spacecraft, however, this time you're aboard a rescue helicopter with some massively powerful guns (as opposed to the wimpy little guns that most shooters feature... right). Ah, but the twists don't stop there! No, sir. There's also a very Choplifter-esque element bolted onto this game. Like the ancient classic, you'll cruise around levels rescuing hapless humans that aren't too keen on becoming extras in the next *Jurassic Park* movie. Swoop in, scoop 'em up on your handy line, and deliver them to one of the rescue choppers located throughout the levels in exchange for weapon power-ups and points—naturally, they wouldn't want to help you crush the dino menace with some free upgrades or a helping hand.

Since this is a shooter from the same developer as *Blazing Star* (think I like that game yet?) it's not surprising that PI2 is completely represented


















by rendered sprites. Think *Donkey Kong Country* if you're having a hard time figuring out what that means. Each sprite is excruciatingly well-animated: from the lowliest dinosaur to the biggest, screen-filling boss. It's a real visual assault when you stand back and really take it in. The only problem is that the color palette is... well, odd. Normally it isn't difficult to get just the right set of colors—since you're either drawing a bunch of mechanized monstrosities, biological entities, or cutesy cartoon characters the hues don't have to be stretched. However, if you decide you're going to mix and match styles (as with *PI2*'s dinos and modern-day setting) you'll need to have a better color palette than the Neo can provide in this case. So while it all looks rather nice while moving, you'll find yourself looking for 'hue' and 'tint' knobs on the front of the cabinet to fix the somewhat odd choices.







So, you've got your blazingly upgradeable attack ship; you've got your menacing dinosaur enemies; you've got some nice, *Choplifter*-esque moments—heck, you've even got some pretty spiffy rendered graphics. However, this is all for naught if the game isn't fun, and that's where *PI2* stumbles a bit. See, *PI2* doesn't stand up to the level-and-a-half test. What's that, you ask? Well, it's quite simple: if a shooter doesn't grab you within the first level and a half, chances are it isn't going to. Unlike other genres that may require a little more effort to garner the full effect, this equals about 25% of the game in the case of most shooters. And if you're not enjoying it by then, you're probably not going to. This also means that you probably won't dump the extra coin to see the later levels, nor will you be racing to the import store to purchase the inevitable console rev. Even for someone often dubbed a "shooter whore" and "twitchaholic," this game is subpar... and that's saying something.








I really wish I had something more positive to say about *Prehistoric Isle 2*... but I don't. While it's good for a play-through, you will not be coming back to this game like you might a *Raiden* or a *Strikers* game. It's too bad Yumekobo didn't decide to simply do a third in the 'Star' series. For now, it's back to my Saturn and *Radiant Silvergun*. **ECM**





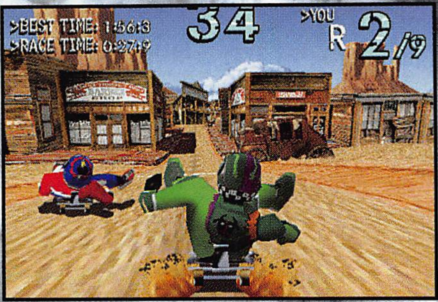


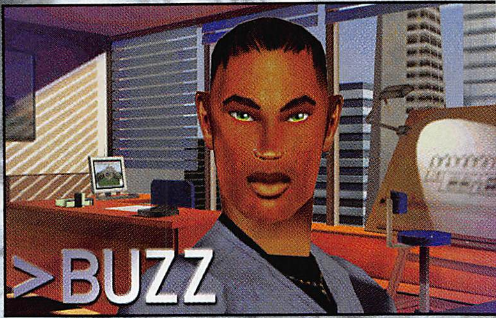




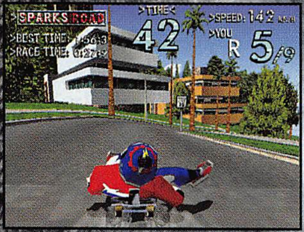






Rolling Extreme



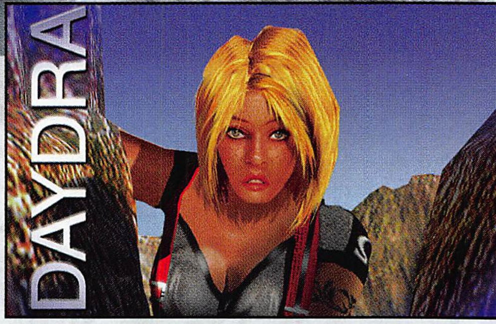




There are only a few sports I don't like watching. Baseball is bearable, I can watch golf to a degree, and once in a while bowling has its moments. But watching racing—especially in the winter—I just can't do. Maybe if you're sitting at home, in the comfort of your La-Z-Boy with different camera angles for the best view; but standing in the snow, shivering from the cold, watching a bobsled whoosh by isn't my idea of a good time. Sure, I can understand the thrill of speed and the danger of downhill street luge racing, but watching it is about as fun as watching traffic in LA. So, when Gaelco (makers of the funky *Radical Bikers* in the arcade) decided to try their luck with *Rolling Extreme*, a street luge game, I wasn't expecting much. An hour after playing though, and I was ready for more street luging lunacy!

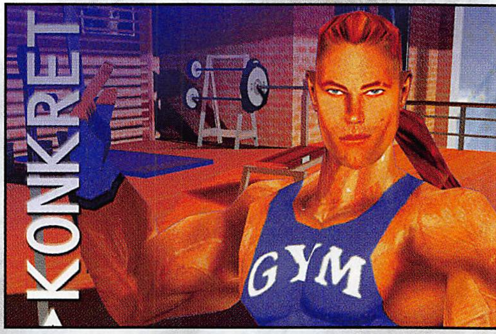
Much like *Radical Bikers*, Gaelco has taken a very simple concept and added a bunch of zany ideas to make the game more interesting. The premise is simple: Race downhill at breakneck speed against 20 opponents. The controls aren't exactly run-of-the-mill; the seat of the cabinet actually shifts left and right, and you have brake pedals for both feet. To turn, shift your body to the side, and for those really tight turns, hit either foot pedal to brake on that side. Hitting both pedals will slow you down, but it won't stop you completely (you *are* going downhill after all). Speed isn't the only thing to worry about—there's also pugilism in this game. Handles at the bottom of the seat feature thumb and trigger buttons, both of which make your street luger swing his fist to either side. You can knock other riders into obstacles or just plain beat 'em up. So, not only do you have to concentrate on racing, but also contend with 19 other riders tryin' to beat the snot outta ya. And on these crazy tracks, it's hard to avoid things.

Track designs and gameplay are... well, let's just say the programmers decided to make it really difficult by throwing as many objects in your path as possible. I'm not talkin' about hazard cones or "Do Not Enter" signs... We're talkin' boulders, dinosaurs, and vehicles with really big tires... Sometimes, there's so much going on onscreen that it felt like my mammoth-sized cranium was going to explode. As if that weren't enough, there are two power-ups that appear which are must-get

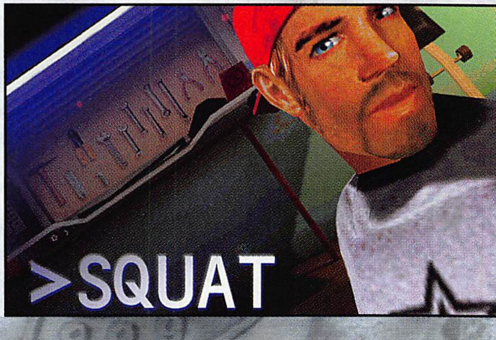


items if you want to finish. The boxing glove power-up makes your punches strong enough to knock a rider off his luge with a single hit, and the wheel power-up gives you a fiery turbo boost. There's also hidden shortcuts which help you make up time.

Set to come out late 4th Quarter '99, this



game will only be seen in arcades that can house the size of the machine (it's pretty gosh-darned frickin' big). So if you've ever wondered what it was like to barrel down a hill by the seat of your pants, *Rolling Extreme* may not be an accurate representation... but it's probably more fun than the real thing. **Dangohead**



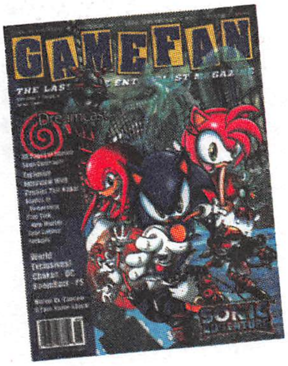
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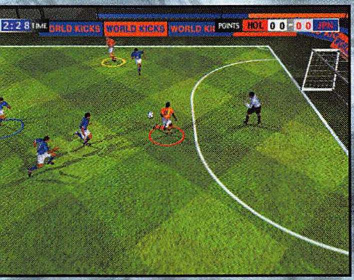
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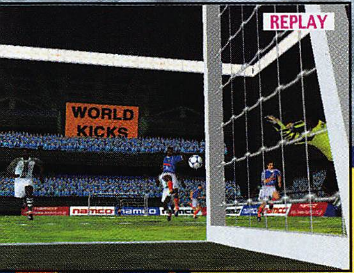
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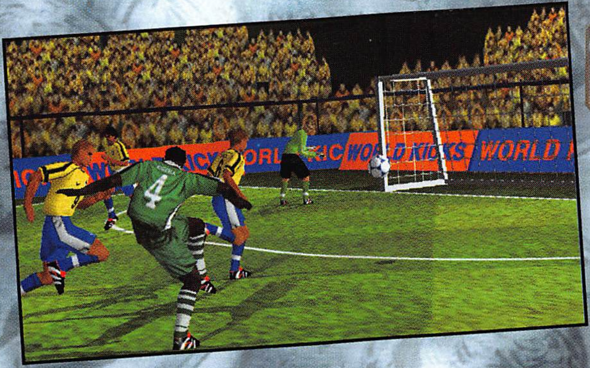












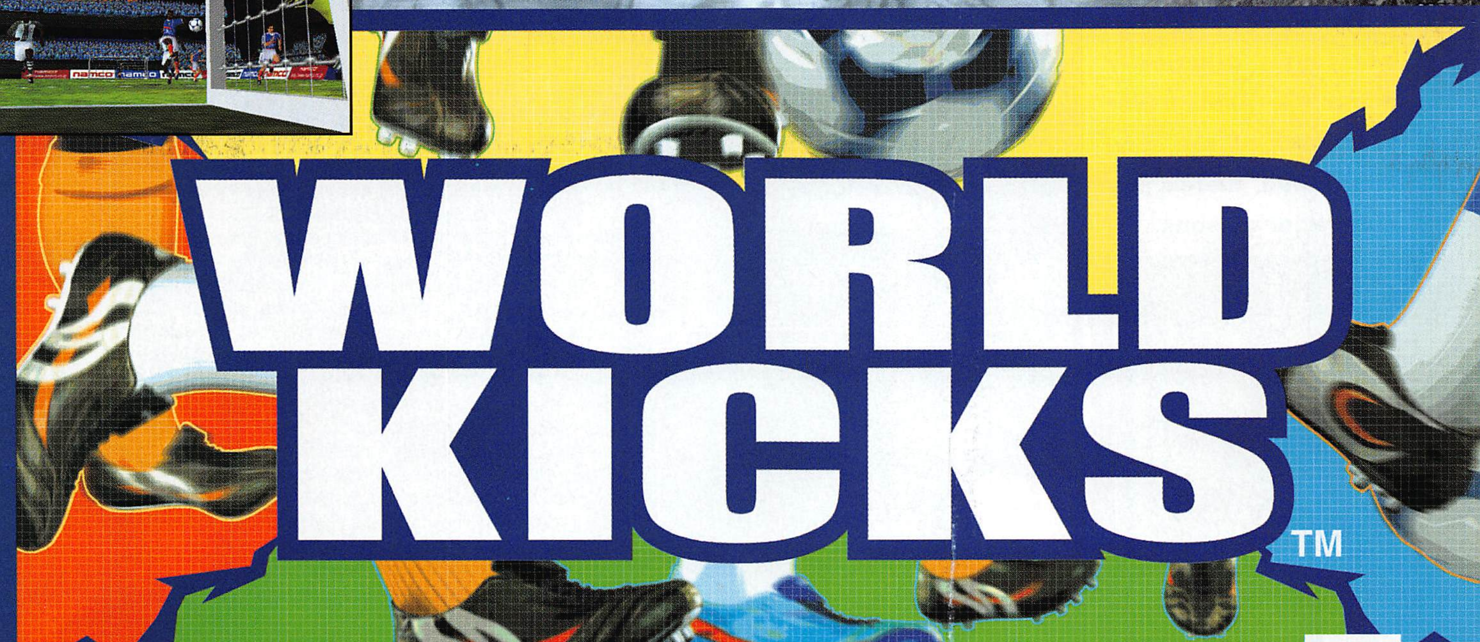


There have been some great arcade soccer games—some with excellent motion capture, some with awesome AI, and others with authentic FIFA lineups. But regardless of the touted features, there's always been something missing. No, it's not the fanatical crowds or the angry referees, but that feeling you're actually kicking something. More than any sport, soccer emphasizes footwork, and without that, it's just not authentic. Well, I guess Namco had that in mind when developing their new arcade soccer game *World Kicks*.

Running on Super System 23 hardware, *World Kicks* is the only soccer game that features eight players (via two linked cabinets), so you know that it'll only be available in the higher-end arcades (Gameworks, Dave & Buster's, Playdium, etc.). Running on Namco's top of the line arcade system means gorgeous animated players, along with plenty of motion-captured animation for slide tackles, corner kicks, and others—grabbed straight from the professional soccer players in Japan. The lighting and shadows look great, though I wish they'd add more animation to the crowd (rather than the default two-frame crowd animations we see so often in sports games). So realistic graphics aren't a problem here, but what about that 'something missing' feeling?

Well, Namco has incorporated something a bit wacky for all you die-hard "soccer" (online editor Kodomo calls it "football") players. There are four soccer ball-shaped buttons at the bottom of the cabinet for each player. Kicking these buttons will allow you to make both offensive and defensive plays, whether it's making a long pass downfield, or slide tackling. While it looks a bit foolish at first, it's actually pretty fun when you get four players kicking the buttons at the same time.

Due out next year, the game is currently 70% done. Nothing drastic should be changed, but hopefully they'll tweak the game a bit more so it's a bit easier to play. All you faithful "football" players who've been looking for a soccer game that makes use of your pedal prowess should get your kicks out of Namco's newest soccer game. **Dangohead**



Graveyard

Traditionally, Graveyard has been the place that *GameFan* laid to rest all the myriad games that never got their due respect during their first incarnation. Nope, games that showed up here only got their due long after their shelf life had expired and any chance of them earning a cent in royalties for their developers had long since gone up in smoke. However, it's come to our attention that there's a veritable legion of games out there, practically complete, that never saw light of the day. Why? Well, there's any number of reasons.

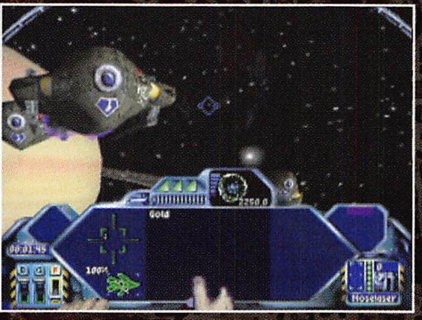












"...we heard whispers of near-complete copies of one of the initial N64 games floating around..."

A game is canceled for not being good enough; th developer may have run out of money to get a gam wrapped; or maybe a publisher decided that a title di n't fill any particular slot and simply tied it to a tree an shot it (it happens, trust me). Along those lines, w heard whispers of near-complete copies of one of th initial N64 games floating around. A game that had rabid following upon a time. A game based off the U import of an amazing anime: *Robotech: Crystal Dream* No, your eyes are not deceiving you—this is wha

ROB
CRYSTA

remains of the once-highly-touted game, originally des tined for publication by then fiscally healthy GameTe (now gone to rot and ruin). Sadly, the game never 'cam together' and while it was shuffled around from pub lisher to publisher after GameTek's demise, the projec was never completely finished and was summaril shelved (that's life in the big city, I suppose).

Diligent souls that we are, we figured you, the reade may be interested in exactly how much of this game wa completed, and whether it should ever see light of day i this cold, cruel world. So without further ado, here's a fina (?) look at *Robotech: Crystal Dreams*...

Let's just get the bad news out of the way real quick. Thi game is far—so very far—from completion. If a publishe even wanted to pick it up at this point, it's certainly nowher near a done deal. Controls aren't final and most of the 'gam doesn't even resemble an E3 demo (and if you're famili with the sorry state of some E3 demos, you'll shudder wit me now: <shudder>). The skeleton of what is here, *may* hav made for an interesting game; but only maybe...

While the story hardly matters at this point, the game fea tures you (as Rick Hunter) facing down the vile Zentradi men ace in a transformable Veritech assault fighter. As I'm sur you've read in the past, though, the game didn't exactly fea ture the most intense visuals to grace an N64 game (a far cr from the CG renders that made the rounds when the gam







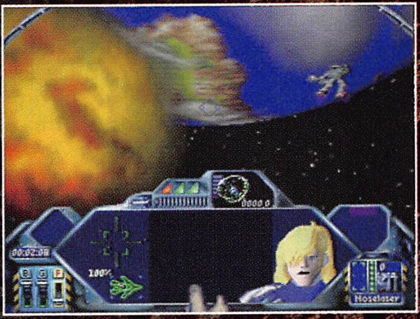
had yet to start development). While it's certainly competent, Rick's constant reflection in the cockpit grew wearisome very quickly. While the effect that accompanies it is decent, it's more a distraction than anything else; nothing like seeing his silly mug when you're bearing down on a Zentradi battle cruiser. The actual missions are a series of training exercises with the occasional showdown with the aforementioned giant-sized Zentradi (though you never actually see one in the flesh). Everything from targeting and blowing up a pod, to maneuvering around giant warships. In fact, it brings to mind the countless 'get you up to speed' tutorials found in every space combat 'sim' (and again I'll ask: How can a game be a sim if what it's simulating doesn't exist... but that's an argument for another time). Only problem is, the missions that are there aren't exactly the most exciting to ever grace such a game.

So where's the good news, you ask? Well, the fact that it's *Robotech* obviously scores high on the nostalgia-meter. While this doesn't mean a thing as far as gameplay and graphics go, it's nice to be able to pilot a Veritech and not have it be in a *Macross VFX* game (even this demo cart is far superior to that migraine-inducing experience). I guess the best thing that could be said is this game showed a great deal of promise. All the





OTECH
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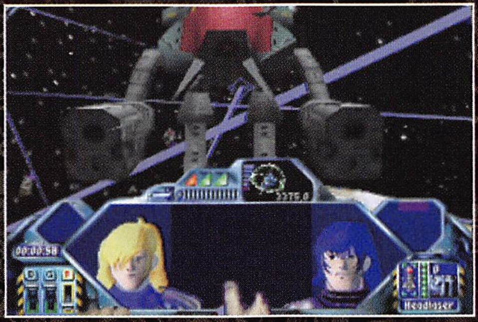
pieces are there for a solid game, including (naturally) the ability to shift between fighter, gerwalk, and battroid modes replete with the levers from the cartoon (uh-oh, I called an anime a cartoon... time to move to Montana and change my identity—I hear Shidoshi's mobilizing the *Sailor Moon* militia with a sizable bounty of protoculture on my head). In fact, if this was the Atari Jaguar you might actually have a slim chance of seeing this game published (wow, never thought you'd read that, did ya?).

Suffice it to say, this game's time is long since past. If it had made it out back when GameTek was a member of the "Dream Team" (I liked them and all, but to include them in any kind of dream seems to be pushing it a little), then it certainly would have made a sizable splash. Heck, released in its current state, it probably would have sold a decent number—after all, even *Cruis'n USA* sold a million copies back then... **ECM**



Check GameFan Online for a more detailed look at this title at www.gamefan.com *in December.*







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Anime, Manga, J-pop, Asian Live Action, Otaku Culture

A Note from Shidoshi...

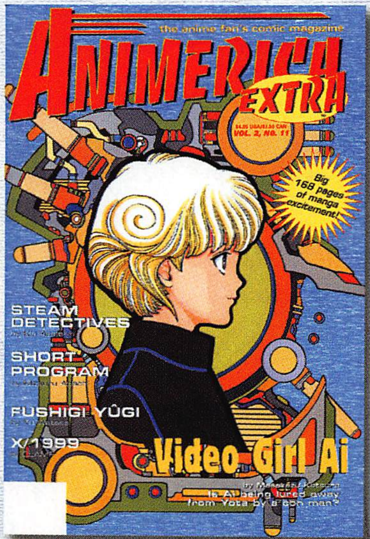
As bold of a statement as this may be, I honestly think that *Suikoden 2* has now become my all-time favorite RPG. Not since the original *Phantasy Star* (which previously held that spot) have I enjoyed and fell in love with an RPG as much as I have with *S2*. The quality of this game just astounds me, as does the amount of heart and soul Konami put into it. With this and *Silent Hill*, Konami has made 1999 one of the best video game years in memory for me. Next time I write this little bit, I'll have my paws on a copy of *WWF2K*, and will no doubt have been playing it non stop for weeks. Me and Y2J are going to take over the world, and there will be NO ONE that will be able to stop us! Wow, this is the last AnimeFan of 1900s... kind of a strange thought, at least to me. I don't know if I'm going to be able to get used to living in the year 2000. ^_^

Manga Scene

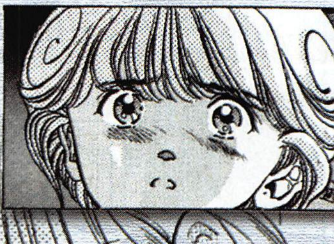
Animerica Extra

Anthology • Viz • 11+
168 pages • US Format • Monthly

A+





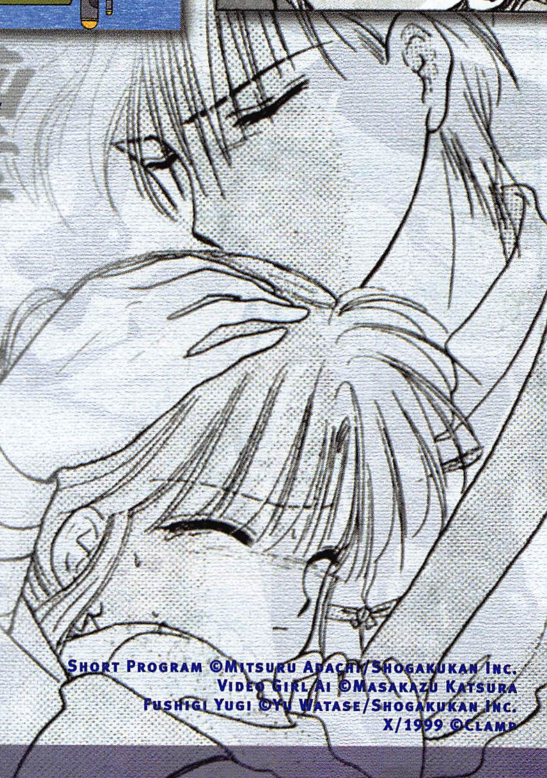


It has been quite a while since I've talked about Animerica Extra here in the pages of AnimeFan, and seeing as how their most recent issue—Vol 2 Number 11—is their first "birthday" issue, I thought it about time that I took another look at the manga anthology.

In Japan, manga fans are treated to big publications which provide a dozen or more titles in each issue, all skewed towards a certain type of fan. In America, however, the tradition of the "32 pages per month" comic unfortunately still lingers. As anime and manga grows in popularity on our shores, however, companies have been pushing the boundaries more and more. Animerica Extra, therefore, is a very important publication, as it gives the American manga fans a taste of what our Japanese counterparts are used to. With the virtual death of MixxZine, AE's spot in the light became even more important, and thankfully Viz has continued to carry the ball proudly. Joining the original four AE titles is *Short Program*, a fabulous and entertaining series of stories that will sadly be coming to an end in the near future. Of course, *Fushigi Yugi, X/1999, Steam Detectives*, and *Video Girl Ai* are still here, and are all strong titles in their own respects. In fact, *VGAi* is quickly becoming one of my favorite manga titles around, and I'm so thankful to Viz for bringing it over here. AE isn't resting on its laurels, however: new titles are being looked into for the future, and it's been announced that starting early next year, AE will be running the lost episodes of *Maison Ikkoku* that were passed over in the series' original US printing (a fabulous idea, and one that connect to one of our news stories).



If I could ask for anything, what would I ask for? Well, I'd love to see Animerica Extra stay at the 168 pages that it is for its birthday issue. AE feels wonderful this thick, and it would help to give a few more pages to each title (I hate having to read *Ai* in such small chunks). My only other real desire, off of the top of my head, would be that I would love to see Viz get the guts to print AE in "correct Japanese format" as they print the *Evangelion* and *Dragon Ball Z* manga. Oh well. Happy Birthday Animerica Extra, and I hope that things continue to go well and that you'll still be going strong for your second birthday. AE continues to be one of the best manga purchases you can make, bar none. *- shidoshi*

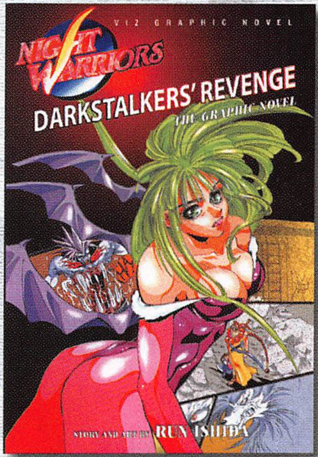


Manga Scene

Night Warriors

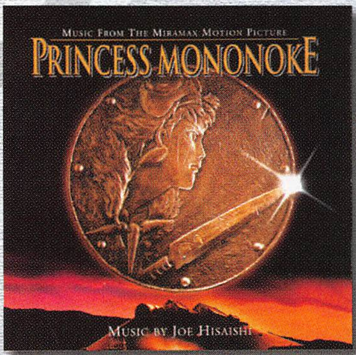
Action • Viz • 12+
168 pages • US Format • Graphic Novel

C



To be perfectly honest, I don't understand this book. Here is what confuses me: We are presented with a variety of tales centered around the *NightWarriors*, Capcom's crew of strange and unusual monsters who fight one another. The book starts off with a battle between Dimitri and Morrigan, then goes into a couple of cute tales of Felicia as she meets up with Talbain and they fight it out with Lord Raptor, and then the second half of the book is Morrigan fighting Donovan. Either Viz just took random chapters from a much larger collection of manga, or Mr. Ishida had no idea what to do with the *NightWarriors* characters and threw together some short, out-of-the-blue stories. It's almost as if the story starts to center its focus on one characters, decides that it's getting boring, and switches to another. This book just feels incomplete, like it's missing quite a bit of itself, and I think it will only serve to frustrate other readers as well. If you want my honest opinion, I'd stick with the anime version of *NightWarriors* that is out there, and leave the manga alone. The manga does have some strength to it—the artwork is pretty good, exciting for the fight scenes yet fun and lively for the others, and what story is here isn't too shabby. If only, after reading, I wasn't left with such an empty feeling inside. *- shidoshi*

Audio Delights



Princess Mononoke

Soundtrack • Milan
32 Tracks • 1 CD • US Release

A-

If you are a serious anime fan, then the name Joe Hisaishi should mean something to you—he is the man responsible for the powerful scores behind Miyazaki's anime classics. As *Nausicaa* has for quite some time been my favorite Hisaishi score, there was no way that I wasn't going to compare the two soundtracks. What I found was that I think the *Princess Mononoke* score is both better and worse than the *Nausicaa* score. Overall, *Mononoke* is a better score, strong all of the way through, and with a nice amount of variation. Every track on the disc sounds very full and mature, a rich combination of music that compares to the best of the Hollywood scores, yet retains its anime flavor. *Nausicaa* has some damn good tracks on it—some of the best musical tracks in anime, to be honest. Unfortunately, some of the other tracks are not that good, making *Nausicaa*'s score very uneven in quality, unlike *Mononoke*. And yet, I didn't find myself clinging to any of *Mononoke*'s tracks like I did with *Nausicaa*. Still, the *Princess Mononoke* soundtrack is a great soundtrack and a stellar example of Joe Hisaishi's masterful work, and I would greatly recommend picking up a copy for yourself. *- shidoshi*

Letters & Stuff

1. Thanks in part to the fact that the *Record of Lodoss War* DVD set was exactly half the cost of the VHS boxed set, I acquired a DVD player(figured that, in the long run, anime on DVD would be cheaper than anime on VHS). Now, I'd like to know what the better titles are for purchase. I don't have easy access to a rental outlet, and no money to waste on bad titles, so could you please help me out?

2. Way back in March, you promised a review of the *Lodoss War* DVD set. What happened?

3. Any chance of seeing *Neon Genesis Evangelion* on DVD?

4. What kind of stereo do you recommend connecting my DVD player to? Until I read the August issue, I'd never heard of Dolby 5.1 before, and I want beefy sound from my DVDs.

5. The first anime I saw was *Wicked City* and *Urotsukidoji*. Am I warped for life?

- Joe Welke

First of all, Joe, sorry to cut your letter down so much (especially since the parts I cut were praising AnimeFan). However, let's see if I can answer your questions. What would I recommend on DVD? Well, pretty much anything **Tenchi***—with special note going to either* **Tenchi Muyo in Love!** *or the this-issue-reviewed* **Tenchi Forever!**. **Serial Experiments Lain** *is another definite must-purchase, as it looks fabulous and is a great series to boot. Since you seem to be a fan of Lodoss, you might want to check out a similar series, the* **Heroic Legend of Arslan**, *which also has a DVD collection out. Others I'd suggest would be* **Revolutionary Girl Utena**, **Ghost in the Shell**, **Macross Plus**, **Night Warriors**, **Grave of the Fireflies**, *the* **Fushigi Yugi** *box set,* **Sakura Wars**, **Darkside Blues**. *Well, that should be a start. In a very rare occasion, I actually did something when I promised that I would—my* **Lodoss War** *DVD review was in the April issue (score was anime A+, DVD C+). As far as* **Evangelion**, *ADV will be bringing it out, trust me—it's more a matter of when than if. Dolby 5.1—don't ask me. All I know is that you have to have a DVD player that can either output a 5.1 signal, and a receiver that can decode the 5.1 signal, or a DVD player with the 5.1 decoder and a receiver that can handle the signal. Finally, yes, you ARE warped for life. Hope you are happy.*

Want to send me letters, artwork, interesting anime/manga tidbits, X-mas gifts, marriage proposals, death threats, Japanese schoolgirl uniforms, or a Japanese schoolgirl to go in said uniform? Then write to me via postal or electronic mail!

Shidoshi
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6301 DeSoto Avenue
Unit #E
Woodland Hills, CA 91367

Or :
shidoshi@gamefan.com

the King of Anime

ダ・キング・オブ・アニメ・'99

FOUR GO IN. ONLY ONE COMES OUT.

The King of Anime '99—the four biggest US anime releases of 1999 square off for the title of "the best release of the year." Last time, ***Perfect Blue*** came in with a brilliant showing, but its three opponents won't go down so easily. Will Miyazaki's latest classic take the crown? Will Tenchi and crew pull one last trick out of their sleeves? Or will the quiet newcomer ***Lain*** surprise them all and take the gold? This month, it's ***Tenchi Forever!***'s turn. Two down, two to go...









Anime Drive-In

Tenchi Forever!

AF Best of the Issue!

Drama • Movie • Pioneer • 14+
95 min • Sub | Dub • VHS | LD | DVD

A+

There's no way that I'm going to be able to say everything I want (or need) to say in the space I have, so I'm going to explain the story VERY quickly. Tenchi walks into the woods and disappears. Ayeka and Ryoko search for him. An older Tenchi shows up in Tokyo living with an older woman, Haruna. Haruna has a strange connection to Tenchi's grandfather. Ayeka and Ryoko try to save Tenchi from Haruna.

If there was ever a release to divide the ***Tenchi*** fans out there, it unquestionably is this movie. You think some of the ***Tenchi*** fans have been whining about ***Tenchi in Tokyo***? You should hear them over this one. What's the big deal about? The problem (said sarcastically) is that ***Tenchi Forever!*** actually pushes the ***Tenchi*** mythos in a more dramatic, mature direction, and some fans simply can't handle that fact. ***TF!*** has a new, and very different, art style, which gives the characters a more "grown up" look and is absolutely great if you ask me. Next is the story itself, a tale about the characters of ***Tenchi***, their feelings and emotions and hopes and fears. There are no huge battles, no evil enemy to defeat, no wild and wacky comedy, no endless bickering between Ryoko and Ayeka. Then come the big crimes: Haruna, and the movie's ending. Haruna, the newest female addition to the world of ***Tenchi***, is a complex and interesting character. On one side, she did kidnap Tenchi, and is holding him against his will. Yet, she helps him reach a level of maturity he couldn't get around the other girls, she seems to truly care about him, and by the end I almost wanted to see Tenchi end up with her instead. Ah, the end. In ***TF!***, we are given a final scene which hints to us which of the girls Tenchi will come to be with. Of course, this is breaking the unwritten law of many a fanboy, as Tenchi isn't supposed to choose—he's supposed to be wishy-washy forever so fans of certain characters won't get their feelings hurt. As you can tell, I'm a bit unsympathetic to the ***Tenchi*** fans out there who aren't happy with this movie. Instead of trying to top an already great "old-school" ***Tenchi*** movie (***Tenchi in Love!***), the creators instead decided to send ***Tenchi*** out with a movie that gives the series the push to true classic status that it needed. As much as I love the ***Tenchi*** series, it's gotten REAL stale as of late, and ***TF!*** is the breath of fresh air that this ***Tenchi*** fan has been waiting for. Thankfully, the DVD fan in me was just as pleased. This disc is phenomenal, both audibly and visually. I can't imagine this movie looking better—well, except on a widescreen television, thanks to Pioneer making this an anamorphic disc. You've got a 5.1 mix for both the Japanese and English tracks, and the music in this movie is positively outstanding. The menus really impressed me—they are simple, yet look very elegant and stylish. The only downfall one might find with this DVD is the lack of much in the way of extras. Not to say that I expect every DVD to have loads of extras, it's just surprising that Pioneer put so little on such an important disc.

Tenchi Forever! is the way that ***Tenchi*** SHOULD be, a dramatic dance of emotion and passion that shines brighter than almost any anime that I can think of. My only fault with this movie is that I want MORE ***Tenchi*** like this, as it makes the rest of the series feel so trite and misguided. If this is indeed the end of ***Tenchi***, I can't think of a better way to go out. ***- shidoshi***









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Anime Drive-In



Wild Cardz

Act/Comedy • OAV (2 Eps.) • US Manga • 13+
50 min • Sub | Dub • VHS | LD | DVD

B-

There's an unwritten law in the anime world: Anything, and I mean ANYTHING, can be turned into an anime storyline. When creating the basis for ***Wild Cardz***, the creators looked to a simple source of inspiration—playing cards. Thus we are given the Crown Knights, a group of four girls, each of whom draws her powers from one of the four suits—Diamonds, Hearts, Clubs, and Spades. While the Crown Knights are use to the sorts of criminals which normally threaten their kingdom, they aren't prepared when a giant machine, shaped like a chess piece, suddenly appears and threatens to destroy the Card Kingdom. The Crown Knights must then use their powers to find out the weakness of the giant chess piece before it can destroy their home.

The visuals in this title are great, with an impressive amount of animation, and artwork that is crisp, colorful, and will no doubt look great on DVD. As well, the characters and the premise itself are both rather interesting. Sure, "originality" isn't something that I would say in describing the character designs, but they are still done well and show a nice level of personality. Now, if only this show wasn't so darn frustrating to watch. The problem is, the anime—and more specifically the pacing—is totally chaotic. There were many times in the show that I simply had no idea what was going on, or what was supposed to be going on, and I had to shrug my shoulders and not understand. This is made worse by the dub; I don't know if it's the voice actors, the English script, or the fact that the mouth sync is somewhat off, but the dub added to the choppiness of the show and my trouble to always grasp the situation. Maybe, hopefully, ***Wild Cardz*** is far easier to understand in Japanese, because what I saw in the show seemed promising. If the show had just slowed down a bit and not made so many cuts, I would have had little to complain about. I think ***Wild Cardz*** is a decent watch, if you plan on checking out the sub and are prepared for the frustrating pacing. ***- shidoshi***





Sakura Wars 2

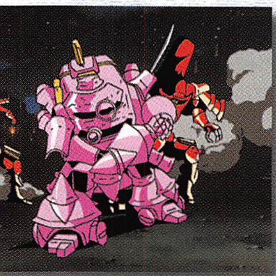
Act/Comedy • OAV (2 Eps.) • Anime Works • 16+
60 min • Sub | Dub • VHS | LD | DVD

A-

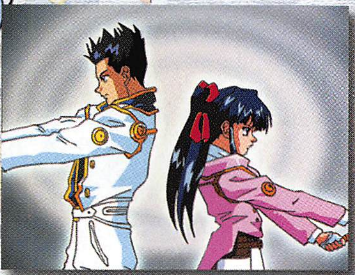
One of the great things about Japanese anime and video games is that you can ALWAYS tell when a story has come from Japanese creators. For example, the story of ***Sakura Wars***: a group of girls pilot steam-powered robots to fight half-metal, half-biological alien creatures who threaten Japan, while in their spare time put on plays at their own theatrical house in order to become better teammates. The story of Sakura and her teammates continues in ***Sakura Wars 2*** as we see the group finally together and trying to work on becoming more of a team. Bickering, fighting, opposing viewpoints, and egos continue to get in the way, and it is decided that the only way that the girls will truly come together is with a male leader. Enter Ohgami, a young military cadet who shows up on the scene and tries to lead the team to victory. Can Ohgami bring the girls together when being "the man in demand" is taking such a toll on him?

Sakura Wars is without question the best Sega-based anime title that I've seen, and thankfully does justice to what is now probably one of Sega's most beloved—and important—titles (I would have loved to have seen ***SW*** get even more production, but that's just me being picky). Although the creators spent half of the OVA series introducing the characters, building character development, and showing us how the team got together, the second half is still fleshed out enough to feel complete. Sure, there could have been more, but what we are given is satisfying. ***SW*** has always had an elegant and wonderful look to it, and thankfully the anime does a great job at keeping that feel. Even on VHS, the show looks beautiful—this is going to be one nice little DVD when it comes out. I wanted to quickly mention the dub—ADV gave the "foreign" members of the cast accents in their English form. I know some people HATE this, and normally I'd have mixed feelings about it, but for some reason here I thought it sort of worked. I still prefer the sub version, but for the dub, I got a bit of a kick out of the accents—go figure. As it is, Sakura and crew are presented with a great little adventure for either fans of the game series or anime fans looking for something new and interesting. Who knows, maybe thanks to ADV bringing this our way, the groundwork may have been laid for a US release of the upcoming ***Sakura Wars*** Dreamcast games. **[begs SOA]** I would complain about there not being enough volumes of ***SW***, but seeing as how more OVAs were announced just days ago, I guess that's no longer a problem. ***- shidoshi***









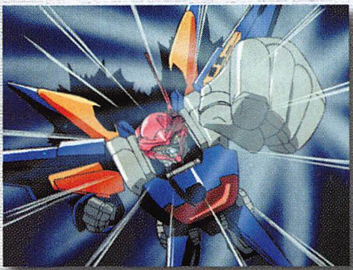
Martian Successor Nadesico

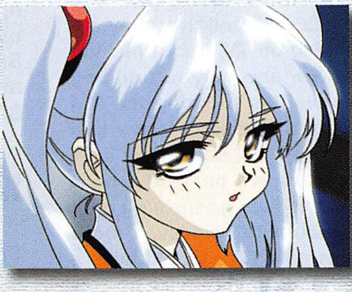
Act/Comedy • TV (3 Eps.) • ADV Films • 12+ **B+**
90 min • Sub | Dub • VHS | LD | DVD

Mankind was dealt a violent and unexpected wake-up call when on October 1st, 2195, the human colony on Mars was destroyed in the blink of an eye. Only one person survived, a young pilot named Akito. With no memory of how, Akito escaped the horror and returned to Earth. A year later, the fight between the humans and the "Jupiter Lizards" rages on. Tired of the uselessness of Earth's defense force, Nergal Heavy Industries creates the Nadesico—a spaceship powerful enough to wage a counter-strike against the alien invaders. Akito runs into Yurika, the ship's captain, and realizing that he recognizes her from somewhere, he gets a job aboard the Nadesico to meet her again. Little does Akito know that he now is part of a mission to return to Mars to face the Jupiter Lizards, the thing in life that he fears most. Watching ***Nadesico***, I couldn't help but be reminded of ***Project A-ko***. Just as ***A-ko*** was a parody of the entire world of anime, ***Nadesico*** is both a parody and tribute to the "Giant Robot" genre, both new and old. And just like ***A-ko***, ***Nadesico*** not only succeeds in its attempts at humor through references and outrageous situations, but it also grows into its own entity that makes it much larger than just a parody. The crew of the ***Nadesico*** is a varied, interesting bunch, one which makes you wonder if each character wasn't chosen as a team member simply for the sake of variety. What does a starship need with an anime voice actress? Why is there an unquestionable clone of Eva's Rei who rolls her eyes at the rest of the crew? What is up with Gai and his love for old giant robot anime? Soon, you get the idea that you aren't supposed to ask—you're just supposed to sit back and enjoy the ride. That is exactly what ***Nadesico*** is about, an anime that simply wants to have fun, and wants you to have fun as you watch. I won't gush over ***Nadesico*** at this point—I usually try to get a decent amount of episodes under my belt before making a final judgement on a show. However, I can safely say that ***Nadesico*** will no doubt end up being a fabulous series, a crazed yet intense space drama that all self-respecting anime fans will want to check out. ***- shidoshi***











The Cockpit

War Drama • OAV • Urban Vision • 16+ **A-**
90 min • Sub | Dub • VHS | LD | DVD





The Cockpit contains three stories of war, all written by the legendary anime/manga artist Leiji Matsumoto (***Spaceship Yamato***, ***Captain Harlock***), and each directed by a different anime director: Yoshiaki Kawajiri (***Ninja Scroll***, ***Wicked City***), Takashi Imanishi (***Gundam 0083***), and Ryosuke Takahashi (***Armored Trooper Votoms***). The first is "Stratospheric Currents", a tale of a German fighter pilot who must decide between his mission and country, and the lives which will be lost if the German atomic bomb—which he has been ordered to protect—is indeed dropped. Next up is "Sonic Thunder Attack Team," which deals with Japanese kamikaze pilots whose lot in life is to pilot a flying bomb to make sure that it hits its mark. Finally is "Steel Dragoon," the tale of a motorcycle and the two Japanese soldiers who face certain death to fulfill their mission. I really have to say, not knowing what to expect going into this one, I came out with a lot of respect for it. No matter if you are a war buff or not, these are serious, very emotional tales about the human side of war, stories that I think anyone will find moving and engrossing. The quality of the animation itself is of a wonderfully high level: When you see the amount of detail and animation in the fast-paced dogfights, you'll never be able to watch an American cartoon again. Rounding out this title is a dub that goes that extra mile and proves that there IS such a thing as a good dub. My only regret was about the third story, both in the way of the story itself and its production value—not that it's bad by any means, it just wasn't nearly as strong as the first two. That little complaint aside, I would really recommend ***The Cockpit*** to all anime fans out there, both because—plain and simple—it's a great title, but also because it's a testament to how powerful and emotional anime can be. I'm a bit worried that it may get lost in the shuffle of all of the "big" titles that have come out recently, which I hope doesn't happen, as it would be a real shame. ***- shidoshi***



AF News Service

Headlines

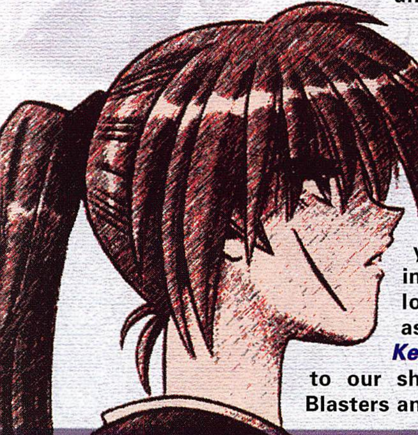
According to AnimEigo, Toshiba of Japan will be releasing a DVD version of the cult classic ***Otaku no Video*** sometime in the near future. AnimEigo is currently re-working their subtitled for ***OnV*** in order to work with a DVD version—which means we lucky US fans will be getting it on DVD as well! Since an LD release never happened, this is great news. • ADV Films has picks up the rights to release the ***Arc the Lad*** anime in the US. While it's currently rumored that the third ***Arc*** game may make it to the US, maybe exposure from the anime will help its chances. • SyCoNet.com has formed a new division, Otaku Music USA, which will bring anime and video game soundtracks to the US. Otaku Music USA expects to pick up between 500 and 700 different titles for US release, and will start selling the first titles in the very near future on their website, and through other retail outlets.

An American... Anime Channel?!?

Unfortunately, I don't have the room to go into detail on this story, but is seems as if the Cartoon Network is currently thinking about creating an action/anime channel. It has been reported that Toonami—the programming block of the CN made up quite a bit with anime—is by far the most popular portion of the channel. So, when something is good, you run with it. While the channel wouldn't be only anime—other Toonami fare such as the ***Powerfull Girls***, ***Thundercats***, ***Transformers***, and so on will no doubt be there—the idea of a channel where anime is one of the major programming choices is a seriously important, and cool, thing. The CN recently announced that they have obtained the rights to the ***Gundam Wing*** TV series. A coup this big would be great for the CN, but it could also be proof that the CN is looking for new shows to fill their new network with. As well, it's rumored that they are also interested in show ***Rurouni Kenshin*** on TV, about picking up one of the ***Tenchi Muyo!*** TV shows, and maybe bringing over more ***Sailor Moon*** episodes, as well as showing the ***SM*** movies on TV. It sounds to me like the Cartoon Network is putting together one heck of an anime line-up, and a new half-anime TV channel to put all of these shows on would be a wonderful thing. As well, if the CN does indeed go through with this idea, it would be the perfect medium to help even more anime TV shows make it to the US, as now they would have a viable source of support. Of course, I'll bring you more on this story as it comes along—but for now, keep your fingers crossed.

Kenshin Attacks US

Rurouni Kenshin—the cult anime favorite that everyone and their brother has been wondering when it would be released in the United States. Well, I've got great news. Media Blasters has officially announce the release of the ***Rurouni Kenshin*** TV series in the US. Media Blasters will be working with ADV Films, who has obtained the rights to the ***Kenshin*** OVAs and movies to try to work out a commonality not only among names for the series, characters, and other possible differences, but also hopefully to get the same cast of voice actors to do the English dub for all US releases. So, if you are a ***Kenshin*** fan, or if you just like good anime in general, you can now look forward to all aspects of the animated ***Kenshin*** world to make it to our shores—thanks to Media Blasters and ADV Films.





SPEED Comes to a Stop?

Sadly, the darling girls known as SPEED, the J-pop group that makes Shidoshi go goofy every time he hears them, has decided to break up. The band will officially call it quits on March 31st of 2000, just over a week after Shidoshi's birthday. Combining the fact that Shidoshi is feeling like he's turning into an old man (while only in his mid 20's), the one-two punch of his birthday and the breakup of SPEED will no doubt severely damage him mentally by April 1st.

More Monthly Manga

Studio Proteus, probably the second biggest source for manga translations in the US, is set to start publishing their own monthly manga anthology early next year—**Super Manga Blast**. A project between Studio Proteus, Dark Horse, and Radio Comix, **Super Manga Blast** will be 128 pages in length, will retail for $4.95 and will run five different manga titles each month. The first issue, if everything goes as planned, will ship in March of 2000. So, what will **SMB** include? First off is ***3x3 Eyes*** and ***Where's Michael?***, both picking up where their US run last left off. Next is ***Seraphic Feather***, a complex and interesting space drama by Hiroyuki Utatane. Then there will be ***Shadow Star***, which looks to be an interesting fantasy-science fiction tale. Now the big news: The fifth title, at least for the first year, will be the early chapters of ***Oh My Goddess!*** that were cut in the initial US run. Oh joy!!! Another interesting point is that production of the anthology will be handled entirely digitally. Studio Proteus will get the artwork on CD-ROM, and all lettering, retouching, and other such tasks will be performed on computer. This all happens thanks to Radio Comix and their digital retouching techniques, and Studio Proteus promises that the results will be fabulous. This new anthology sounds great, and I encourage anime and manga fans everywhere to ask their local comic shops to order **Super Manga Blast** to help Studio Proteus give this project a good chance to survive.

Ghost in the Shell... 2?!

Masamune Shirow recently finished up the first volume of his new two-volume ***Ghost in the Shell 2*** manga. The first volume should hit Japan late this year or early next, and the second should come late next year. Even better, Studio Proteus expects to start translation on the first volume shortly, and we US fans should see it next summer.

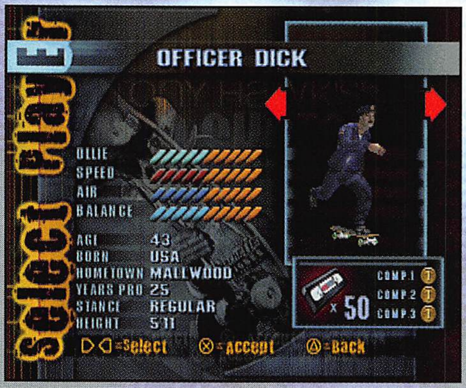
Hocus Pocus

codes, hints & strategies

Welcome to the pages of cheats, codes, and hints galore!!! Upon these leaves you will find all the assistance you'll need for the hottest games today. Not satisfied? Need help on another game? No problem! If you need codes or hints on any game, mail GameFan, or e-mail hocuspocus@gamefan.com. Now, travel with thy controller in hand, to a place where cheaters prosper...

Code of the Month!

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER



Unlock Everything

Pause the game while playing and hold **L1**. While holding **L1** press ●, →, ↑, ↓, ●, →, ↑, ■, ▲. If entered correctly the screen will shake. Be warned this code gives you everything, including Officer Dick. Note: This code spells "CRUDCRUST".

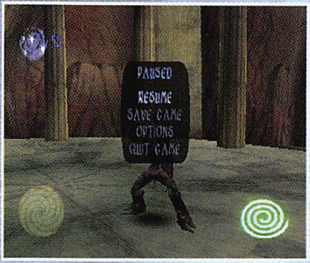


Legacy Of Kain: Soul Reaver *Gameplay Codes*

PlayStation

Getting your arse kicked in your soul searching? Thank god for codes! All the following codes are entered at the pause screen during gameplay:

Refill Health
Press and hold **L1**, then press ↓, ●, ↑, ←, ↑, and ←.



Level Up your Health Meter
Press and hold **L1**, then press →, ✖, ←, ▲, ↑, and ↓.

Maximum Health
Press and hold **L1**, then press →, ●, ↓, ↑, ↓, and ↑.

Refill Magic
Press and hold **L1**, then press →, →, ←, ▲, →, and ↓.

Maximum Magic
Press and hold **L1**, then press ▲, →, ↓, →, ↑, ▲, and ←.

Pass Through Barriers
Press and hold **L1**, then press ↓, ●, ●, ←, →, ▲, and ↑.

Wall Climbing
Press and hold **L1**, then press ▲, ↓, **L2**, →, ↑, and ↓.

Hurt Raziel
Press and hold **L1**, then press ←, ●, ↑, ↑, and ↓. Why the heck you would want to do this beats the hell out of me.



Soul Reaver
Press and hold **L1**, then press ↓, ▲, **L2**, →, →, ↓, ↓, ←, ▲, ↓, and →.

Aerial Reaver
Press and hold **L1**, then press ✖, →, ↑, ↑, ▲, ←, ←, →, and ↑.

Kain Reaver
Press and hold **L1**, then press ✖, ●, →, ▲, ←, ←, →, and ↑.



Fire Reaver
Press and hold **L1**, then press ↓, ↑, →, ↑, ↓, ←, ●, →, and ↓.

Force Power (no, you *Star Wars* freaks... not that one)
Press and hold **L1**, then press ←, →, ●, ←, →, and ←.

Constrict
Press and hold **L1**, then press ↓, ↑, →, →, ●, ↑, ↑, and ↓.

Force Glyph
Press and hold **L1**, then press ↓, ←, ▲, ↓, and ↑.

Stone Glyph
Press and hold **L1**, then press ↓, ●, ↑, ←, ↓, →, and →.

Sound Glyph
Press and hold **L1**, then press →, →, ↓, ●, ↑, ↑, and ↓.

Water Glyph
Press and hold **L1**, then press ↓, ●, ↑, ↓, and →.

Fire Glyph
Press and hold **L1**, then press ↑, ↑, →, ↑, ▲, **L2**, and →.

Sunlight Glyph
Press and hold **L1**, then press ←, ●, ←, →, →, ↑, ↑, ←.



Silent Scope *Hidden Modes*

ARCADE

So, you think you got the sniper skillz to pay the bills, eh? Well, here are some hidden modes in the arcade game that will really make you sweat. After you've entered each code, a second gun shot sound will confirm if you input the code correctly. And if you get through all these modes, I hear the Navy SEALS are looking for a few good men:

Professional Challenges:
After inserting coin(s), squeeze and hold the Trigger and push Start. While holding the Trigger, guide your aiming ring onto the mode of your choice, and press the Start button 4 times. Now, the aiming ring and enemy locating markers will not appear on the main screen.

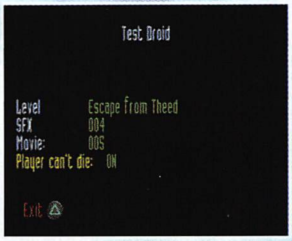
Night Vision Challenges:
After inserting coin(s), squeeze and hold the Trigger and push Start. While holding the Trigger, guide your aiming ring onto the mode of your of your choice, and press the Start button 5 times. Now, all stages will be held in the dark, with Night Vision enabled only in your scope.

Professional Night Vision Challenges:
After inserting coin(s), squeeze and hold the Trigger and push Start. While holding the Trigger, guide your aiming ring onto the mode of your choice, and press the Start button 6 times. All stages will be held in the dark, with no aiming ring and enemy locating markers appearing on the main screen.

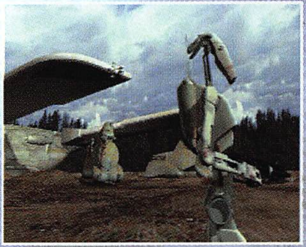
Star Wars: Phantom Menace

PlayStation

The Nearly All-Inclusive Debug Menu



If the Force is not enough, go to the main menu screen and highlight "Options". Now press ▲, ●, ←, L1, R2, ■, ●, and ←. You will hear a confirmation sound if you input the code correctly. Now press and hold L1, Select, and ▲ and a "Test Droid" screen will appear. You now have a level select, sound test, FMV Sequence Select, and Invincibility select enabled.





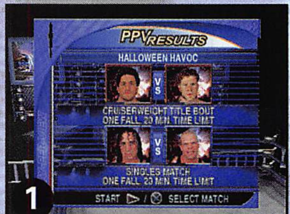


WCW Mayhem

Slammin' New Codes

All the following codes are entered at the PPV (pay per view) password screen:



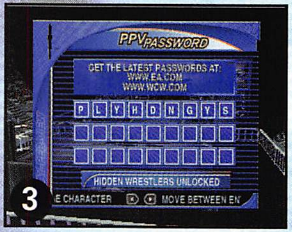


1 Halloween Havoc............ WCW's newest event is already in the game! Enter "td^pKRmZ-<yL" (make note of the lower and uppercase letters) to unlock the Halloween Havoc event.

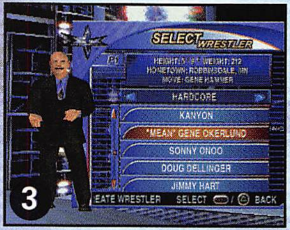
2 All Areas Open................ To access all the backstage areas to fight, enter "CBCKRMS". Now, simply get out of the ring during gameplay and run into the backrooms (though your opponent has to follow you).



3 All Wrestlers.................. Now you can find out why Gene Okerlund is "mean". Enter "PLYHDNGYS" for all the wrestlers in the game.



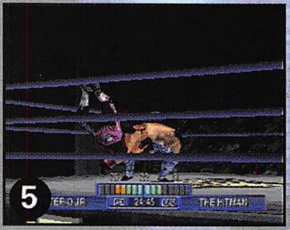
4 Play As Same Wrestler...... What's scarier than Goldberg? How bout two of them? To enable same wrestler matches, enter "DPLGNGRS".



5 Stamina Meter.............. Enter "PRNTSTMN" and a numerical value of each wrestler's stamina will be displayed.



6 Super Created Wrestlers...... To create wrestlers with maxed out states, enter "MKSPRCWS".



7 Masked Rey Mysterio Jr........ For a masked version of Rey Mysterio Jr. enter "MSKDLTLRY".

Road Rash 64

Whiplash Gameplay Codes

Getting knocked back, sideways, and every other direction off your hog? Perhaps the following codes will give you a helping spiked-glove-wielding hand.

Enter each code at the main menu (a confirmation sound will play if you input each code correctly).

All bikes and tracks
C▲, C◀, C◀, C▶, L, R, C▼, Z

Scooters
C▼, C▶, C▲, C◀, Z, Z, L, C◀

Cop mode
Z, C◀, C▼, C◀, Z, L, R, C▼

Stage 2
R, C▶, Z, R, L, C▲, C◀, C▲

Stage 3
R, C▶, C▶, C▶, R, C◀, C▼, Z

Stage 4
R, C▶, C▼, C◀, C▶, C▶, Z, L

Stage 5
Z, C▶, C▼, C◀, C▶, C▶, Z, L

Lego Racers

Lego-maniacal Codes



Each of the following codes are entered while creating a new driver:



Rocket car
Enter "FLYSKYHGH" as a name at the make license screen. Now get ready for some real speed!



No wheels
Enter "NWHLS" as a name at the make license screen for a hovercraft-like racing vehicle.

Xena: Warrior Princess

Gargantuan Gameplay Codes

If you're having difficulty beating up the mythical baddies in this game, here are some gameplay codes to assist you in your adventures.



Level select
At the main menu, highlight "New Game" and press ▲, ■, ●, ▲, ■, ↑, ↑, ↑. You will hear a confirmation sound if you input the code correctly.



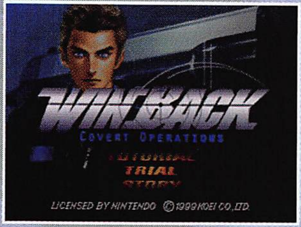
Invincibility
At the main menu, press ↑, ↑, ↑, ●, ■, ↑, →, ←. You will hear a confirmation sound if you input the code correctly.

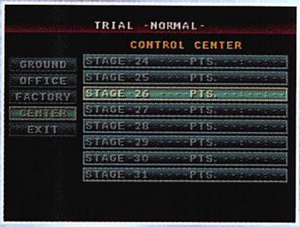


Full shield and attack
At the main menu, press ▲, ■, ▲, ■, ■, ↑, ↑, ↑. You will hear a confirmation sound if you input the code correctly.

Winback Levels, Endings

Need more than those sharp-shooting skills to get deeper into the game? Well, it's a good thing we have this level select just for you!





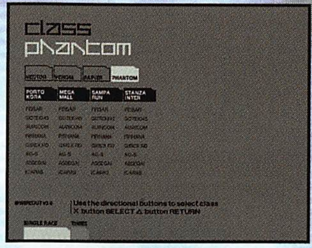
To open up the level select (called Trial Mode), at the Main Menu screen ↑, ↓, ↓, →, →, →, ←, ←, ←, ←, and C▼ + Start.

The following text may spoil the game for you so you may want to finish the game first before you read the following text.

Avoid fighting Cecile Caryle (WARNING: SPOILERS!!!)
You will not fight Cecile Carlyle (boss) if you do not:
1. Reach the beginning of Stage 23 within 5 hours of game time.
2. Reach the room where you fight Jin (boss) in stage 27 within 6 hours of game time.

Look for a full-blown strategy guide for *Winback: Covert Operations* next issue!

Wipeout 3 Lightspeed Codes





All the following codes are entered as a user name:

JAZZNAZ
Phantom class

WIZZPIG
All circuits

AVINIT
All teams

THEHAIR
All challenges

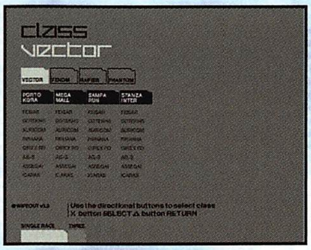
MOONFACE
Infinite hyperthrust

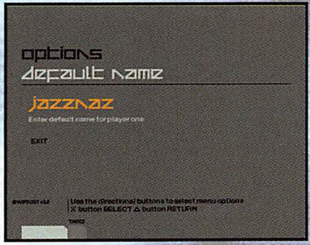
GEORDIE
Infinite shields and thrust

DEPUTY
Infinite random weapons

CANER W
Four proto-type tracks

BUNTY
Unlock tournaments





Hot Wheels Turbo Codes

To enable all of these scorching codes, enter the following commands for the appropriate code at the Main Menu screen. You should hear a confirmation sound if you input the code correctly:

Little Cars ....■, R2, L2, ▲, ▲, L2, R2, ■
Flat Shaded...............................L1, R1, L2, R2, L1, R1, L2, R2
"Dude" Sounds ....R2, R1, L2, R2, ■, ▲, L1, R1
Big Tires...■, ▲, ■, ▲, R1, R1, L2, L2
Instant Turbo ....R2, L1, ■, ▲, R1, L2, L1, R2
Unlock TowJam ....■, ▲, L1, R1, L2, R2, ■, ▲







Sarge's Heroes





The following codes are entered at the password screen:

All weapons
Enter "NSRLS" to start with all the weapons in the game.

Infinite ammunition
Enter "MMLVSRM" for infinite ammo for your weapons.

Mini "Me" mode
Enter "DRVLLVSMM" to play a miniature version of your character.

Play as Tin Soldier
Enter "TNSLDRS" and your character will have metallic skin (can you say "T1000"?)

Play as Vikki
Enter "GRNGRLRX" to play as the green little lady.

Play as Plastro
Enter "PLSTRLVSVG" to play as the Patton-like general.

Level passwords
Again, enter the following passwords for the corresponding levels:

TRGHTR ....Spy Blue
TDBWL ....Bathroom
MSTRMN ....Riff Mission
TLLTRS..........................Forest
SCRDCT........Hoover Mission
STPDMN ....Thick Mission
BLZZRD ....Snow Mission
SRFPNK ....Sharp Mission
GNRLMN ....Fort Plastro
HTTRT ....Scorch Mission
ZBTSRL ....Showdown
HTKTTN.....................Sandbox
PTSPNS ....Kitchen
HXMSTR............Living Room
VRCLN...........The Way Home

Monster Rancher 2 A Listing of Special Monsters

As promised last issue, here's a list of the special monsters you can



open up. Remember that some of these monsters cannot be unlocked until you reach a certain level.

Title: Dead or Alive
Artist: Tecmo
Monster: Kasumi



Title: Devil Dice
Artist: THQ
Monster: Dice

Title: The Woman in Me
Artist: Shania Twain
Monster: Mia

Title: Mellow Gold
Artist: Beck
Monster: Moo

Title: Thoroughbred
Artist: Carol King
Monster: Trotter

Title: Under the Table and Dreaming
Artist: Dave Matthews Band
Monster: Blue Thunder



Title: Enema of the State
Artist: Blink182
Monster: Chef

Title: Downtown Train
Artist: Rod Stewart
Monster: Tram

Title: Austin Powers: The Spy Who Shagged Me
Artist: Various Artists
Monster: Eggplantam

Title: Feel...
Artist: The Vejitables
Monster: Eggplantam

Title: Appetite for Destruction
Artist: Guns 'N Roses
Monster: Skeleton

Title: Waste of Mind
Artist: Zebrahead
Monster: Zebra Saurian

Title: Brave Fencer Musashi
Artist: Squaresoft
Monster: Shogun



Title: Legend
Artist: Bob Marley
Monster: Raggae Plant

Title: Third Eye Blind
Artist: Third Eye Blind
Monster: Ruby Night

Title: Mulan Soundtrack
Artist: Various Artists
Monster: Kokushi Muso

Title: You've Come a Long Way Baby
Artist: Fatboy Slim
Monster: Sumopion

Title: Gangeetar Trippin
Artist: Fat Boy Slim
Monster: Sumopion



Title: Terminator 2
Artist: Various Artists
Monster: Metal Joll

Title: Dances with Wolves Soundtrack
Artist: Various Artists
Monster: White Tiger

Title: GEX 3
Artist: Eidos
Monster: Frog Hopper

Title: Greatest Hits
Artist: Al Green
Monster: Frog Hopper

Title: Rush Hour Soundtrack
Artist: Various Artists
Monster: Kung Fu Hare

Title: Homogenie
Artist: Bjork
Monster: Shiaghi

Title: Millennium
Artist: Backstreet Boys
Monster: Happy Mask

Title: Tenchu
Artist: Activision
Monster: Ninja Kato

Title: Titanic Soundtrack
Artist: Various Artists
Monster: Deluxe Liner

Title: Knockout Kings
Artist: Electronic Arts
Monster: Boxer Bajari

Title: The X Files: Songs in the Key of X Soundtrack
Artist: Various Artists
Monster: Ultrarl

Title: Never Mind
Artist: Nirvana
Monster: Swimmer

Title: Backdraft Soundtrack
Artist: Various Artists
Monster: Cinder Bird

Title: Men in Black Soundtrack
Artist: Various Artists
Monster: Chinois



Title: The Matrix
Artist: Various Artists
Monster: Poison

Title: Fanmail
Artist: TLC
Monster: Silver Suezo

Title: Aenima
Artist: Tool
Monster: Bronze Suezo

Title: Tiger Woods 99
Artist: Electronic Arts
Monster: Birdie

Title: Monster Rancher
Artist: Tecmo
Monster: Sueki Suezo

Title: The Flintstones Soundtrack
Artist: Various Artists
Monster: Pithecan



Title: Tecmo Super Bowl
Artist: Tecmo
Monster: Forward Golem

Title: Tecmo Stackers
Artist: Tecmo
Monster: Caloriena

Title: Tecmo's Deception
Artist: Tecmo
Monster: Mocchini

Title: Metal Health
Artist: Quiet Riot
Monster: Bloodshed

Title: Metal Gear Solid
Artist: Konami
Monster: Gaboo Soldier

Title: The Little Mermaid Sndtk.
Artist: Various Artists
Monster: Mermaid

Title: FIFA 99
Artist: Electronic Arts
Monster: Dribbler



Title: The Matrix
Artist: Various Artists
Monster: Poison

Title: Rally Cross 2
Artist: 989 Studios
Monster: Radial Niton

Title: Comparsa
Artist: Deep Forest
Monster: White Birch

Title: Electric Warrior
Artist: T. Rex
Monster: Pole Mock

Title: The Bearsville Collection
Artist: Bobby Charles
Monster: Watermelony

Title: The Crow: City of Angels Soundtrack
Artist: Various Artists
Monster: Cawken

Title: Speak My Language
Artist: Inner Circle
Monster: Raggae Plant

Title: Star Wars Ep. 1 Sndtk.
Artist: Various Artists
Monster: Galaxy

Title: No One Can Stop Mr. Domino
Artist: Acclaim
Monster: Dominos

Title: Andy Warhol
Artist: The Velvet Underground & Nico
Monster: Gold Dust

Title: Licensed To Ill
Artist: Beastie Boys
Monster: Express Worm

Title: Kagero: Deception II
Artist: Tecmo
Monster: Time Noise

GameShark Codes

Soul of the Samurai - PS

Infinite HP
80098110 00FA

Infinite MP
80098114 FA00

Have All Samurai Weapons
B0090002 0001
3009963C 0000

Have All Ninja Weapons
B0050002 0001
30099638 000C

Suikoden 2 - PS

Enable Character Codes

Abizboah
3006AE41 0007

Adlai
3006AE79 0007

Alberto
3006AE82 0007

Alex
3006AE6F 0007

Amada
3006AE35 0007

Anita
3006AE37 0007

Annallee
3006AE80 0007

Apple
3006AE65 0007

Ayda
3006AE3B 0007

Barbara
3006AE72 0007

Badeaux
3006AE43 0007

Bob
3006AE38 0007

Bolgan
3006AE25 0007

Camus
3006AE31 0007

Chaco
3006AE46 0007

Chuchara
3006AE5F 0007

Clive
3006AE16 0007

Connell
3006AE7C 0007

Eilie
3006AE23 0007

Emilia
3006AE70 0007

Feather
3006AE42 0007

Flik
3006AE12 0007

Freed
3006AE33 0007

Fitcher
3006AE68 0007

Futch
3006AE19 0007

Gadget
3006AE3A 0007

Gabocha
3006AE2D 0007

Gantetsu
3006AE56 0007

Gengen
3006AE2C 0007

Genshu
3006AE3F 0007

Georges
3006AE1B 0007

Gijimu
3006AE4A 0007

Gilbert
3006AE89 0007

Gordon
3006AE7A 0007

Hai Yo
3006AE52 0007

Hanna
3006AE27 0007

Hans
3006AE7B 0007

Hauser
3006AE32 0007

Hoi
3006AE57 0007

Hilda
3006AE6E 0007

Hix
3006AE17 0007

Huan
3006AE6C 0007

Humphrey
3006AE1A 0007

Jeanue
3006AE84 0007

Jess
3006AE6D 0007

Jude
3006AE83 0007

Kahn
3006AE34 0007

Karen
3006AE29 0007

Kasumi
3006AE59 0007

Kiba
3006AE67 0007

Killey
3006AE3C 0007

Kinnison
3006AE2E 0007

Klaus
3006AE86 0007

Koyu
3006AE4B 0007

L.C. Chan
3006AE55 0007

Leona
3006AE6B 0007

Lepante
3006AE7D 0007

Lorelai
3006AE1E 0007

Lo Wen
3006AE4C 0007

Luc
3006AE45 0007

Makumaku
3006AE5B 0007

Marlowe
3006AE88 0007

Mazus
3006AE4D 0007

Max
3006AE87 0007

Meg
3006AE39 0007

Mekumeku
3006AE5D 0007

Mikumiku
3006AE5C 0007

Miklotov
3006AE30 0007

Millie
3006AE28 0007

Mokumoku
3006AE5E 0007

Mondo
3006AE4F 0007

Mukumuku
3006AE40 0007

Nanami
3006AE22 0007

Nina
3006AE47 0007

Oulan
3006AE3E 0007

Pesmerga
3006AE1D 0007

Pico
3006AE81 0007

Raura
3006AE7F 0007

Ridley
3006AE85 0007

Rikimaru
3006AE20 0007

Rina
3006AE24 0007

Rulodia
3006AE5A 0007

Sasuke
3006AE4E 0007

Seigfried
3006AE58 0007

Sheena
3006AE15 0007

Shilo
3006AE2F 0007

Shin
3006AE1F 0007

Shiro
3006AE2A 0007

Shu
3006AE69 0007

Sid
3006AE48 0007

Sierra
3006AE3D 0007

Simone
3006AE51 0007

Stallion
3006AE53 0007

Tai Ho
3006AE36 0007

Taki
3006AE77 0007

Templeton
3006AE66 0007

Tengaar
3006AE18 0007

Tenkou
3006AE71 0007

Teresa
3006AE75 0007

Tessai
3006AE7E 0007

Tetsu
3006AE6A 0007

Tomo
3006AE21 0007

Tony
3006AE78 0007

Tsai
3006AE44 0007

Tuta
3006AE26 0007

Valeria
3006AE1C 0007

Victor
3006AE13 0007

Viki
3006AE14 0007

Vincent
3006AE50 0007

Wakaba
3006AE54 0007

Yoshino
3006AE49 0007

Yam Koo
3006AE74 0007

Yuzu
3006AE76 0007

Zamza
3006AE2B 0007

Thousand Arms - PS

Infinite HP for First Character
800BE024 270F

Max HP for First Character
800BE026 270F

Infinite EP for First Character
800BE028 03E7

Max HP for First Character
800BE02A 03E7

Infinite HP for Second Character
800BE034 270F

Max HP for Second Character
800BE036 270F

Infinite EP for Second Character
800BE038 03E7

Max EP for Second Character
800BE03A 03E7

Infinite HP for Third Character
800BE044 270F

Max HP for Third Character
800BE046 270F

Infinite EP for Third Character
800BE048 03E7

Max EP for Third Character
800BE04A 03E7

Final Fantasy Anthology - PS

Have All Lores
3002FD29 00FF
8002FD2A FFFF

Have All Rage Attacks
8002FD2C FFFF
8002FD2E FFFF
8002FD30 FFFF
8002FD32 FFFF
8002FD34 FFFF
8002FD36 FFFF
8002FD38 FFFF
8002FD3A FFFF
8002FD3C FFFF
8002FD3E FFFF
8002FD40 FFFF
8002FD42 FFFF
8002FD44 FFFF
8002FD46 FFFF
8002FD48 FFFF
8002FD4A FFFF

Have All Sword Techniques
3002FCF7 00FF

Have All Blitzes
3002FD28 00FF

Tony Hawk Pro Skater - PS

Infinite Time
80025556 2400

Max Score
8006CECC FFFF
8006CECE 2402
8006E880 FFFF
8006E882 2402

Max Special Bar
8002F6E4 0FFF
8002F6E6 2402
8002F6E8 AE02
8002F7CE 2400
8002F7D2 2400
8003BA5E 2400
8003C0EA 2400

Paper Thin Skaters
8008B6A2 2400

Skate Upside Down
80085182 2400

Pac-Man World - PS

Infinite Health
80153C58 0004

Max Score
80153C60 FFFF
80153C62 0FFF

Max Pac Dots
80153C68 00FF

Infinite Lives
80153C64 0063

Invincible
80153C58 0004

100 Apples After Pick-Up
80153E1E 0063

JoJo's Venture - PS

Territorial Mod-Lock Key
D0035996 1040
80035996 1000

Infinite Time
8006E110 0063

Player 1 HP
300CDEBA 0090

Player 1 Stand
300CD3D2 0050

Player 1 SP Max
300CDEB2 000A
300D08A1 0070

Player 2 HP
300CE24A 0090

Player 2 Stand
300CD762 0050

Player 2 SP Max
300D08E6 000A
300D08E5 0070

All Book & Gallery
80067560 FFFF
80067562 FFFF
80067564 FFFF
80067566 FFFF
80067568 FFFF
8006756A FFFF

Dew Prism - PS

1 Hit Kills
D0058696 1C40
80058696 1C00

Max HP
8009B584 03E7

Max MP
8009B586 03E7

Max Act
8009B588 03E7

Max Def
8009B58C 03E7

Max Money
8009B4F0 967F
8009B4F2 0098

All Items
B0110001 0000
3009B5B8 0063

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater Codes & Moves Galore!

Tony Hawk's Pro Skater has proven to be one of the most addicting games we've ever played. Not only is it a breeze to pick up and understand, but it's deeper than many fighting games. Getting your bearings (no pun intended) will be a bit easier with the following. Happy skating, and remember, what doesn't kill you only makes you that much stronger—so does a compound fracture turn you into Superman? Special thanks to Team Chicken for all the help. **Cerberus**

SPECIAL CODES

Big Head Mode



Pause the game while playing and hold **L1**. While holding **L1** press ■, ●, ↑, ←, ←. If entered correctly the screen will shake. To see your skater with an enormous cranium quit the current game and continue with another. Note: This code spells "SCULL".

Unlimited Special Meter



Pause the game while playing and hold **L1**. While holding **L1** press ✖, ▲, ●, ↓, ↑, →. If entered correctly the screen will shake. When you unpause the game your Special Meter will not diminish even if you eat it. Note: This code spells "XTCUTR".

Skater Attributes to 10



Pause the game while playing and hold **L1**. While holding **L1** press ■, ▲, ↑, ↓. If entered correctly the screen will shake. When you unpause the game you'll notice your skater is much faster. Note: This code spells "STUD".

Skater Attributes to Max (13)



Pause the game while playing and hold **L1**. While holding **L1** press ✖, ■, ■, ▲, ↑, ↓. If entered correctly the screen will shake. When you unpause the game you'll notice your skater is much faster. Note: This code spells "XSSTUD".

Unlock All Stages



Pause the game while playing and hold **L1**. While holding **L1** press ▲, →, ↑, ■, ▲, ←, ↑, ■, ▲. If entered correctly the screen will shake. Quit your current game and return to the stage select. Highlight the stage you'd like to play and press ✖. Note: This code spells "TRUSTLUST".

Unlock Everything



Pause the game while playing and hold **L1**. While holding **L1** press ●, →, ↑, ↓, ●, →, ↑, ■, ▲. If entered correctly the screen will shake. Be warned this code gives you everything, including Officer Dick. Note: This code spells CRUDCRUST.

STANDARD TRICKS

Standard tricks can be performed at any time, but keep in mind you'll always need enough time to land properly. If you pull off the move, but don't manage to complete a clean landing you won't get the points. While most of the standard kick tricks are shared by most of the skaters, some tricks do vary from skater to skater. Grab and Grind scores can be increased by holding onto the board longer with ● or grinding longer with ▲. Here's the rub:

Random Tricks

Ollie (200 pts.): ↑ + ✖
Fastplant (250 pts.): ↑ ↑ (Just before a jump)
Handplant (up to 1400 pts.): ↑ + ▲ (on a ramp lip)

Kick Tricks

Kick Flip (100 pts.): ← + ■
Sex Change or Varial (800 pts.): ↙ + ■
Impossible (250 pts.): ↓ + ■
360° Flip or Front Foot Impossible (600 pts.): ↘ + ■
Heelflip (100 pts.): → + ■
Hardflip or Fingerlip (600 pts.): ↗ + ■
360° Shove It (250 pts.): ↑ + ■
Kickflip to Indy (600 pts.): ↖ + ■

Grab Tricks

Method (315 pts.): ← + ●
Stalefish (315 pts.): ↙ + ●
Tail Grab (315 pts.): ↓ + ●
Benihana (420 pts.): ↘ + ●
Indy Nosebone (315 pts.): → + ●
Rocket (367 pts.): ↗ + ●
Japan (367 pts.): ↑ + ●
Madonna (525 pts.): ↖ + ●

Grind Tricks

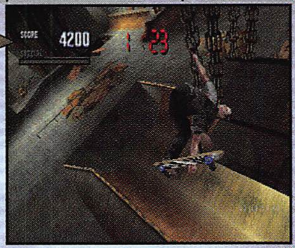
Boardslide: ← + ▲
Smith Grind: ↙ + ▲
5-0 Grind: ↓ + ▲
Smith: ↘ + ▲
Boardslide: → + ▲
Crooked Grind: ↗ + ▲
Nosegrind: ↑ + ▲
Crooked Grind: ↖ + ▲

SPECIAL TRICKS

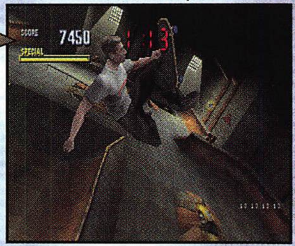
Note: Special Moves can only be performed while the Special Meter is yellow. If the Meter is green, you must perform regular tricks until the Meter is full.

Tony Hawk

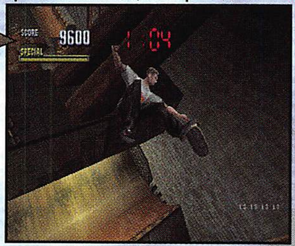
Kickflip McTwist (4,000 pts.): → → ●



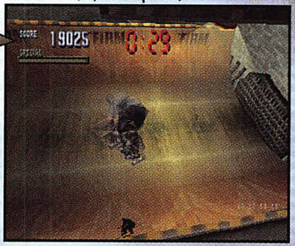
540° Board Varial (2,000 pts.): ← ← ■



360° Flip to Mute (1,500 pts.): ↓ → ■



The 900° (8,000 pts.): → ↓ ●



Bob Burnquist

Backflip (4,000 pts.): ↑ ↓ ●



One Footed Smith Grind: → → ▲



Burntwist: ← ↑ ▲

more next page

Geoff Rowley

Backflip (4,000 pts.): ↑ ↓ ●



Double Hard Flip (1,500 pts.): → ↓ ■



Darkslide: ← → ▲



Bucky Lasek

Kickflip McTwist (4,000 pts.): → → ●



Fingerlip Airwalk (2,000 pts.): ← → ●



Varial Hellflip Judo (2,500 pts.): ↓ ↑ ■



Chad Muska

Front Flip (4,000 pts.): ↓ ↑ ●



One Foot Thumpin': → ↓ ▲

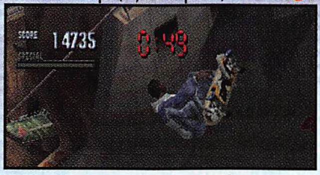


360° Shove-it Rewind (1,500 pts.): → → ■

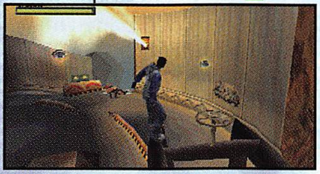


Kareem Cambell

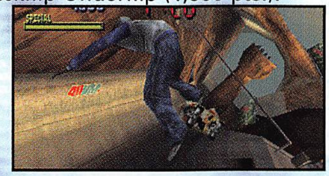
Front Flip (4,000 pts.): ↓ ↑ ●



Casper Slide: ↑ ↓ ▲



Kickflip Underflip (1,500 pts.): ← → ■

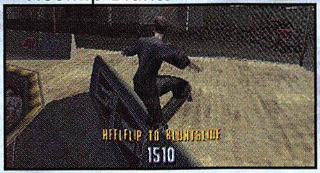


Andrew Reynolds

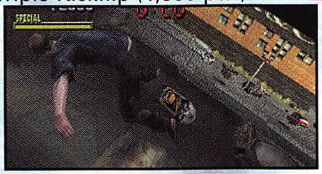
Backflip (4,000 pts.): ↑ ↓ ●



Heelflip Bluntslide: ↓ ↓ ▲



Triple Kickflip (1,500 pts.): ← ← ■

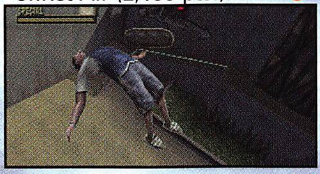


Rune Glifberg

Kickflip McTwist (4,000 pts.): → → ●



Christ Air (2,100 pts.): ← → ●



Triple Kickflip (1,575 pts.): ↑ ↓ ■

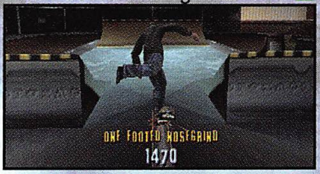


Jamie Thomas

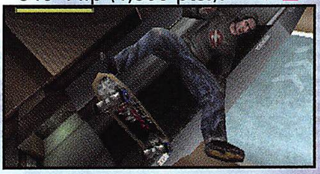
Front Flip (4,000 pts.): ↓ ↑ ●



One Footed Nosegrind: ↑ ↑ ▲

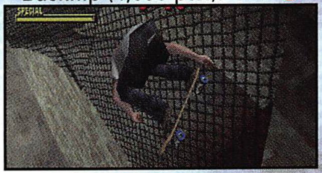


540° Flip (1,500 pts.): ← ↓ ■

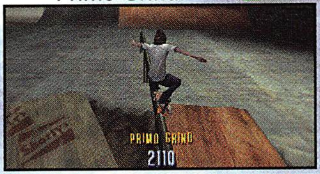


Elissa Steamer

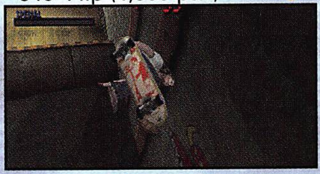
Backflip (4,000 pts.): ↑ ↓ ●



Primo Grind: ← ← ▲



540° Flip (1,500 pts.): ← ↓ ●



Officer Dick

Yeehaw Front Flip (4,000 pts.): ↓ ↑ ●



Assume the Position(1,575 pts.): ← ← ●



Neckbreak Grind: ← → ▲



whether the *Metal Gear* series will wind up on the PlayStation 2 or Dreamcast. Well, if early word on Solid Snake's next project turns out to be true, Nintendo's Dolphin will end up the winner, with its very own exclusive *Metal Gear* game. It seems that Konami and Nintendo's recent partnerships go a long way when it comes to hot franchises, and Snake and company may just make it as a launch title when the Dolphin comes to shore.

Shen Mue Delayed Till the Year 2000

While Nintendo fanatics are relishing thoughts of a *Metal Gear* game on Dolphin, Sega maniacs will be crushed with the following news: Due to unknown problems, *Shen Mue* has been delayed till April of 2000. While some may blame the sheer size of the game as the source of the delay, sources close to the project indicate that a complete facelift will once again make this the killer app in Japan. Unfortunately, the bad news only gets worse, because Sega of America has confirmed that *Shen Mue* will not make it to U.S. shores till Christmas 2000.

Toe Jam and Earl Get Funky Once Again

The creators of the original *Toe Jam and Earl* have confirmed that *Toe Jam & Earl 3* will in fact be making its way to the Sega Dreamcast. Tentatively titled *Toe Jam, Earl, and Latisha*, the game will be fashioned much like the first adventure except modeled in a completely 3D world. Unfortunately, the game does not currently have a publisher, but my morning horoscope pointed out that Sega is very interested in the project.

Sega's Shinobi Returns

It looks like all of Sega's classic characters are having a Second Coming of sorts—and the original ninja side-scroller *Shinobi* is certainly no exception. Because of the barren state of stealth-like third person adventures, Sega has decided to give the ninja that started it all another chance on the Dreamcast sometime next year. Details are not-so surprisingly scarce, but the game is expected to be unveiled at the spring Tokyo Game Show, along with a playable version at next year's E3. *Tenchu's* got nothing on the original!

The World is Not Enough is Enough for Black Ops

After much delay, *Tomorrow Never Dies* has hit the streets. Some sources have indicated that Black Ops has secured the rights to develop the next Bond-flick-to-game, *The World is Not Enough*. Let's just keep our fingers crossed that Black Ops' next Bond game makes it out in the first half of the next millennium.

In other Black Ops-related news, word has it head honcho John Botti has been circling the globe to find a proper location for an as-yet-unnamed game. For which console this game will surface remains a mystery, but we have learned that Botti has a bounty hunter theme in mind. Now when are we going to see that *Treasures of the Deep* sequel?

THQ's Slappy Happy for Fighting Games

Besides the never-finished *Shaolin*, THQ, in conjunction with Polygon Magic, is working on a 2D/3D fighting game for the current PlayStation. Imagine the graphics of *MegaMan Legends* combined with the gameplay of *Guilty Gear* and *Street Fighter Alpha*. While the project is a ways off, you can bet it'll be leaps and bounds ahead of *Versus*.

Ninja Gaiden: PlayStation 2 Style

It seems like everyone is bringing back their old ninja beat-'em-ups nowadays. So who's the returning star-throwing hero this time? None other than Tecmo's *Ninja Gaiden*. While the project hasn't been a secret since E3 of '99, Tecmo has recently confirmed that the game will make it as a launch title for PlayStation 2—at least in the U.S. The game will use a modified version of Temco's *Dead or Alive 2* engine and may even feature a fighting mode just to show off more of the PS2's poly-pushing capabilities.

Starship Troopers Coming to a Console Near You

Everyone's favorite bug-killing marines will soon be making appearances on next generation console systems including the PlayStation 2 and the Nintendo Dolphin. That's right, a *Starship Troopers* game will soon see light of day thanks to the recent morning cartoon show and a red hot toy license. The publishing company that picked up the rights still wants to remain nameless, but don't be surprised if you see a bug-squashing experience sometime before 2001.

Naughty Dog's New PlayStation 2 Mascot

GameFan has learned that premiere Sony developer, Naughty Dog, has been working on a PlayStation 2 title that will use an engine similar to that used in *Crash Team Racing*. The game has been in development for eight months now and is currently using "Y" as a working title. Although no details could be exposed at the time, we did discover some interesting tidbits on the game's mascot and the outlook on Crash making an appearance on the PlayStation 2!

According to our source, Crash himself won't be making a second appearance on Sony's next system... at least, not by Naughty Dog's hand, simply because of the limitations to Crash's look. The source claimed that Naughty Dog wants to design a character that will utilize the PS2's added power, expanding the possibilities of the character's look.

Gauntlet Legends Coming to Dreamcast

Green Elf needs health on orange-tinged console—a line that will soon become reality thanks to great third party sales on Dreamcast. Midway, after being shocked by the success of *Ready 2 Rumble*, has decided to bring their recent arcade revision of *Gauntlet Legends* to the Sega Dreamcast. While the original arcade board was based on a 3DFX graphics chip, rumor has it that the DC version will not only sport a higher polygon count, but also have four never-before-seen levels. Expect a late December to early January release with full four-player support.

Dreamcast 2 In the Year 2000?

OK, so Sega's next wonder system may not be ready for sale in the year 2000—but a reliable source has whispered that the Big Blue's next entry in the console arena will indeed be revealed next year to steal a little of the PlayStation 2's thunder. Early specs are still unknown. But not only will a DVD contraption of some sort be included, there will also be a customized version of Hitachi's new polygon-pushing chip—can you say 80 million polys per second? I knew you could!

Dolphin Dissed by Japanese Gamers

In a recent poll taken by Japanese gaming magazine *Famitsu*, only five percent of gamers in the land of the rising sun plan to purchase Nintendo's next-generation console when it's finally released. Could the bad taste of the Nintendo 64—a console that never did well in Japan—be the cause for these prospective buyers' doubts? More than likely, yes, but with all of the recent press over the PlayStation 2 and absolutely no information on the secretive Dolphin, the votes may have come a little too prematurely to be take seriously. Let's just hope Nintendo doesn't miss out on the lucrative RPG market this time!

Metal Gear Dolphin Bound?

Perhaps one of the biggest debates as of late in the gaming world has been

Characteristics mentioned by the source were "shiny armor" and "flowing hair." Sounds like Naughty Dog is designing a female knight in shining armor... we'll keep our fingers crossed!

So when is this game going to be released? We've heard it won't be released at PS2's launch in September 2000, but will follow the same *Crash* release schedule. In other words, it'll be a second-generation PS2 title. As always, we'll stay on top of it for you!

Year 2000 Release of Dolphin Looking Doubtful

A member of an American development team, currently in the planning stages of software for Nintendo's next-generation system, the Dolphin, was willing to sneak a little info to GameFan today concerning the progress of the console. When asked if he felt that the system would be ready for Nintendo's promised 2000 release date, the source stated that it was highly unlikely. The source pointed out to us, "Even if Nintendo is playing a staring game with Sony and Sega, the time to blink is over. Sony has shown its cards. Why won't Nintendo at least slip the press a screen or some numbers? It's too late for Sony to change the hardware, you know. I think Nintendo knows that they are going to have to wait until 2001."

If this developer is only in the planning stages, how could they hope to have their game out alongside the Dolphin in late 2000? "If they do make it by 2000, third-party teams are going to miss the launch. There's just not enough time. And I think they know we aren't going to be happy if we're left out. Look at the good it did Sega to have all those games out at launch." Indeed, Sega did benefit from having a solid launch lineup.

Would the mystery developer care to elaborate on what the Dolphin can do or what project he is working on? "Unfortunately, I can't. Nintendo has a timeline for letting people know what it has up its sleeve. I will say, though, that you will be very pleased. We are." As for the project, "If I told you, that would ruin the surprise. Expect a lot of surprises early next year."





THE POSTMEISTER!

Write to me, I'm running for president!!!
The Postmeister
6301 DeSoto Avenue Suite E
Woodland Hills, CA 91367

Dreams Of A Little Blue Cyborg

I heard that you can give information about anything. Well, I would like to know if the Dreamcast (the best in the whole universe) is going to get a *MegaMan X* game, because that is my favorite game in the world. I've beaten every game, even the import Saturn version of *MegaMan X3*. I was just wondering if you can kick down some information about the future of *X* and if he's blasting his way to the Dreamcast.

First time writer, and long time reader;
Zeke Coley
Via the Internet

I've danced with the Man of Rock and his legion of enemies on many occasions, and the battles we've waged will go down in the annals of legend. No opposing cyborg or robot has dared stand before the combined might of MegaMan and Post-Fu. Because I am a veteran of MegaMan's past (and future), it is with sadness that I inform you that Capcom currently has no plans to deliver a 2-D follow-up to the MegaMan X series. In fact, we haven't heard any news on a possible 3-D adventure with the little blue cyborg.

Now, this disheartening information needn't cause you to abandon hope and wander into the hills, weeping aloud and questioning a universe in which a Dreamcast version of MegaMan doesn't exist (though I have been known to do this on occasion, and it's strangely quite therapeutic). MegaMan is one of Capcom's oldest, most respected names... and you can be sure they're not done with him yet. Whether or not his next adventure will hit the Dreamcast or PlayStation 2, however, is another matter entirely...

Is The Nintendo 64 Already Extinct?

Dear Posty,

What's up? I own an N64 and am concerned about them making the Dolphin. I have been with Nintendo since the 8-bit days, and don't think it's smart that they make the Dolphin too soon. I think they need to make more games for the N64 or it will die out like the Saturn. I want to know what you think.

A Concerned Gamer
Asheboro, NC

Worry not, my worrisome Post-Fu acolyte... Nintendo knows all too well from whence their money flows... and you needn't worry that the N64 will stop receiving support any time soon. After all, Nintendo hasn't been the one flooding the system with software—oh no! That task has fallen to Rare and the legion of third-party publishers who are all too eager to cash in on the Big N's "fun machine." Nintendo's got big plans for the Dolphin, this much you know... but this is not why you have written to me. You have scaled the peaks of gaming wisdom, hoping to take a seat at my side because you want to know ***more***. *Fortunately, I can help you banish your fears regarding the Dolphin's upcoming release.*

The first thing you should realize is this: It probably won't be out until late 2000 or early 2001... and that's just in Japan. That gives you a good year or more to enjoy your N64 without worrying about a new Nintendo system rendering it obsolete. There's plenty of new software coming for it, too... enough to keep you busy well into the prime annum of the new millenium. You ain't got no worries, junior—Nintendo's got you taken care of. Worrying about a Saturn-like abandonment isn't something you should be expending effort on (check out how long Nintendo's stuck with the Game Boy!). Instead, you should be using that energy to perfect the skills that keep you on the bleeding edge of gaming! Your training in the Postal arts should be constant and diligent, so that one day you, too may drink deeply from the ever-raging river of gaming knowledge that runs at the feet of every true Post-Fu master!

Girls Dig Video Games Too!

Dear Posty,

I am a great fan of yours and I look forward to your column every month. I missed you guys for a while there and I am so glad you are now going strong. I just wanted you to know that I am a female gamer, and I am sick and tired of females complaining that this industry does not pay enough attention to them. There are a lot more guys playing games, but that does not mean that they always have to appeal to women. I, personally am very excited about all of the girls that are coming out of the woodwork, but I think that the editors and the gaming industry are doing a great job. These games are not for just men or women but for everyone. I just don't want any more girls to gripe anymore about biases or I'll go crazy! Thank you.

Shannon Delgado
Richmond, VA

It's good to hear from one of the rarest of breeds... a female gamer who has trained her mind to ignore all else, and focus squarely on the solitary goal of the truly hard-core: To play and enjoy video games! A fact many women often forget is that ugly male video game characters are just as much a rarity as ugly females are! Not everyone can have the staggering charisma, chiseled physique and incredible good looks of the Postmeister... but you'd never know it from the games that are released every year! It's the same way in Comic books and movies, though—the heroes are almost always perfect physical specimens, and the villains are usually twisted and evil-looking. It's not a plot to set women's lib back a decade... it's just a fantasy!

That's not to say that certain gamers and game editors don't occasionally get a little "carried away" in their enthusiasm for the latest female game characters... because they do, they do! Those with the highest degree of self-discipline manage to contain their adolescent nature to occasional outbursts during gameplay. However, a few let their feelings roam to more public, less emotionally stable arenas. But enough about Shidoshi and his "Blue Mary" SNK fixation; let's move on...

Will Gates Take Over Gaming, Too?

With the recent rumors of Microsoft releasing an X-Box system, doesn't it seem like Sega's days are numbered? I mean, the PS2 and X-Box will compete at the high end for people who want a set-top box that does everything, and the Dreamcast and Dolphin will be for the pure gamer who doesn't want the extra cost. Now, the Dolphin will be more powerful than the DC and also have the backing of Nintendo, unquestionably the greatest game designers ever (*Mario*, *Zelda*, etc.).

It seems like only three could survive, and the DC seems like the most likely

casualty, though I would think it had almost two more years in it. Any thoughts?

Justin Young
Via the Internet

Bill Gates is a smart man. A rich man. And just like every other smart rich man, he's always looking for ways to get richer. Microsoft sees video game consoles making a sharp move toward the mainstream, and you should know that my close, personal friend, Mr. Gates, is all about getting on the leading edge of every technological wave, shredding that silicon curl with the best of 'em. The X-Box is reportedly Microsoft's attempt to elbow their way into the video game "do it all" set-top box marketplace, and even though this is a company with more money than you or I can imagine (and with a $5/month salary, I can imagine a lot!), they aren't exactly the only bully on the block right now—they're just the one with the most lunch money.

I guarantee that the competition is paying real close attention to the "Big MS" right now, though any company with that much money behind it is a competitor right out of the starting gate. However, the PlayStation 2 and Dolphin won't be out till well into 2000/early 2001, so Sega's got all the time they need to build the Dreamcast user base here in America. By the time the competition has something to show for all the hype, Sega will already have the lead in next-gen gaming hardware, and they'll probably be thinking about their own successor to the DC. Things happen pretty quickly in this business, and making predictions is silly when you have to consider this many players, this much money, and this kind of technology. Give it some time, pull up a seat with GameFan and watch these heavyweights slug it out... this should be one title fight worth the price of admission—if Microsoft doesn't pay off the referees, that is!

Aliens Need Games Too...

Postmeister,

I am Novious, from the realm of Vismaci. I have taken the time out from reigning terror on the populous that is Cyops 9 to visit this primitive planet and witness the event known as Dreamcast. I must admit it has created a buzz of sorts about my crew, and I bring forth the following inquiries to your feet... in admiration, of course.

1. Are the likes of *Shinobi*, *Alex Kidd*, *Quartet*, *Zillion* and *Fantasy Zone* to see the light of day on this system?
2. To prepare for the next console wars, in your powerful and very credible opinion, do you feel Dreamcast will be upgraded to meet the challenge?
3. This... "Bernie" human, what has become of him since his banishment from S.O.A?
4. My best warrior, Metrel, would like to train in this "fu" you mention. Is it... lethal?

Thank you for time Posty,
Till X-time,
Novious
Supreme 6

For a great many years, I have known the importance video games play in the lives of our extra-terrestrial friends. It seems like only yesterday, I was "beamed up" into that benevolent alien race's mothership, exposed to a variety of physical and mental tests, and exposed them to the vault of gaming knowledge that resides within my skull. The results combined were enough to overload even their advanced technology, and this sparked an interest in gaming that burns to this very day. As the knowledge of gaming spreads throughout the universe, and the Postmeister's name is whispered upon the tranquil winds of the cosmos, it is my duty to continually update the curious ET's whenever they inquire. Otherwise, I start hearing those voices again...

1. To this point, none of the titles you mentioned have been announced, or even rumored, for the Dreamcast. It's particularly strange that we haven't heard from Shinobi in a while, since it's such a popular, long-running action series. Time will tell... but I wouldn't hold out much hope for any of the other titles.



Another contribution from Andrew Madalora, who's sent us more lately than the illustrious Jen Seng! Keep 'em coming, Andy!

2. Dreamcast is fully capable of being upgraded to meet a wide variety of storage, peripheral and modem updates. You probably won't see any serious increases in speed or processing power until a whole new Sega console is introduced, however.
3. Mr. Stolar has not been seen or heard from in quite some time, though many speculate he's already been discussing positions with several established video game companies. By the time you read this, he may have already selected one... be sure you keep checking our website for updates!
4. Metrel will need catlike reflexes, phenomenal good looks, an insatiable appetite for frozen foods of various kinds, a burning hatred for canned meat, and the patience to endure even the most strenuous physical challenges. Techniques such as the STB can be lethal if applied incorrectly, though only to the practitioner...

For those who are not already aware of it, Post-Fu is a method of educating the most thick-skulled among gaming's great unwashed; it is not designed for the application of deadly force. Though there have been those who've reported headaches, nausea, insomnia and a variety of other symptoms after long hours of training, the harmonious inner balance attained after Post-Fu meditation usually eliminates any negative physical effects. As always, read the box and consult your doctor before undertaking any new training regimen... read on, as we delve even deeper into the enigma that is the Postal Arts!

The Tao Of Post-Fu Training

Oh great Postmeister, who has power greater than GameFan itself, I have spent all my years trying to be a true Post-Fu master and as I was meditating (with a box of wafers) it hit me!!! How does one know if he is a Post-Fu master?

Your servant,
Puff

P.S. Vote proud... vote Posty!

Your efforts will not go un-rewarded, Puff... you have trained hard, and have asked a valid question. It is one that I will answer for the benefit of both you, and the thousands like you who work patiently to unleash the hard-core Post-Fu master that slumbers deep within. One day, you will wake up moments before your morning alarm goes off, and your first instinct will be to play video games. Shrugging off that impulse with all your might, you will ingest massive quantities of junk food and caffeine; yet nothing will sate your hunger like a solitary bag of waffle chips. The drive to eliminate canned meats of various kinds will force you to hit the local market, and within minutes you'll be recognized and cast from the store as an infidel from the city gates.

Homeward you will travel, in your souped-up Postal 4x4 (the pride of any hard-core Post-Fu student)... anxious to play yet more video games, before undertaking hours upon hours of strenuous martial discipline. You will train your body for the day when your newly-elected President invokes the most feared and revered edict known to mankind, the PTFF law. (Don't know? Read a few back issues!) The joy you take in informing the ignorant masses will be equaled only by your compassion in "giving a round" to a scrub in your favorite fighting game, as Master Dango has taught you. In your meditation chamber late that evening, you'll achieve a quiet serenity... and your spirit will travel across the barriers of space and time, to a cave deep beneath GameFan Headquarters. On the spectral plane, you will face seven Postal challenges within my cavernous abode. If you pass them successfully, you will have unlocked the vault of gaming knowledge that only the chosen few can access. It is a challenge only a true master can overcome... and one which every Post-Fu student aspires to. Your path is clear. I'll be waiting for you...

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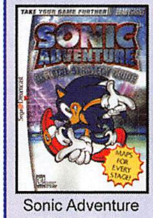
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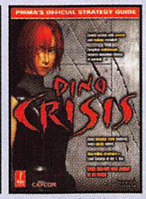
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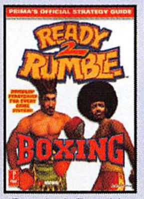
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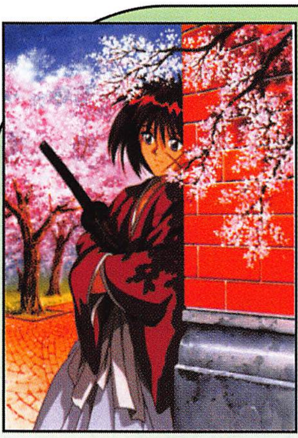
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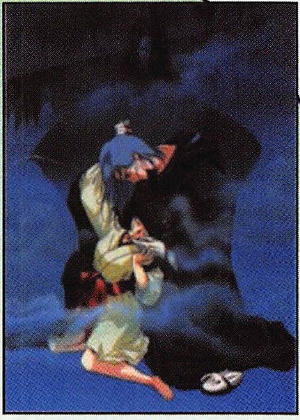
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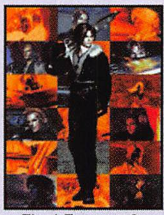
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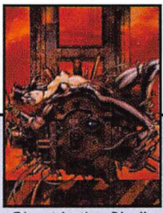
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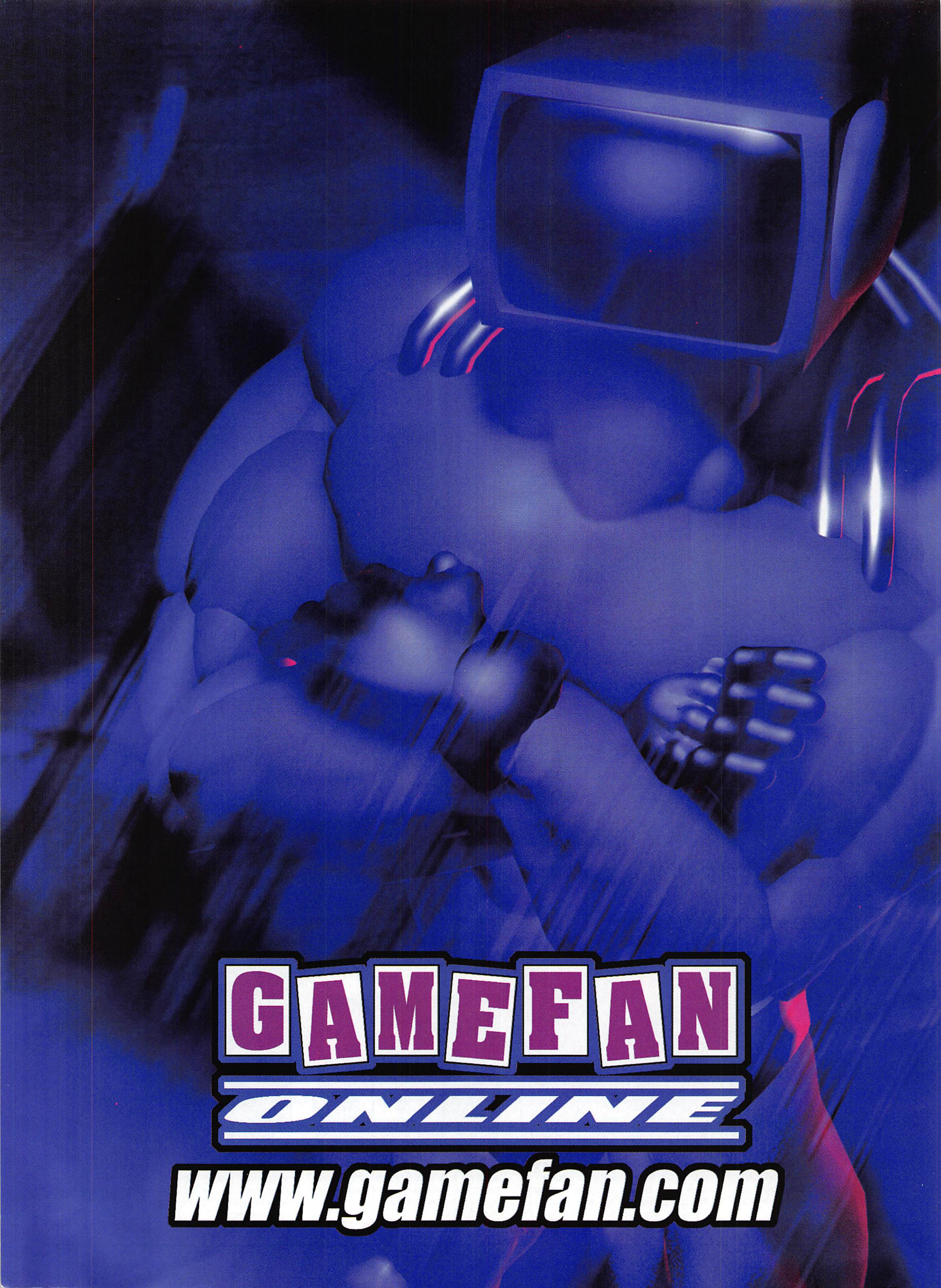
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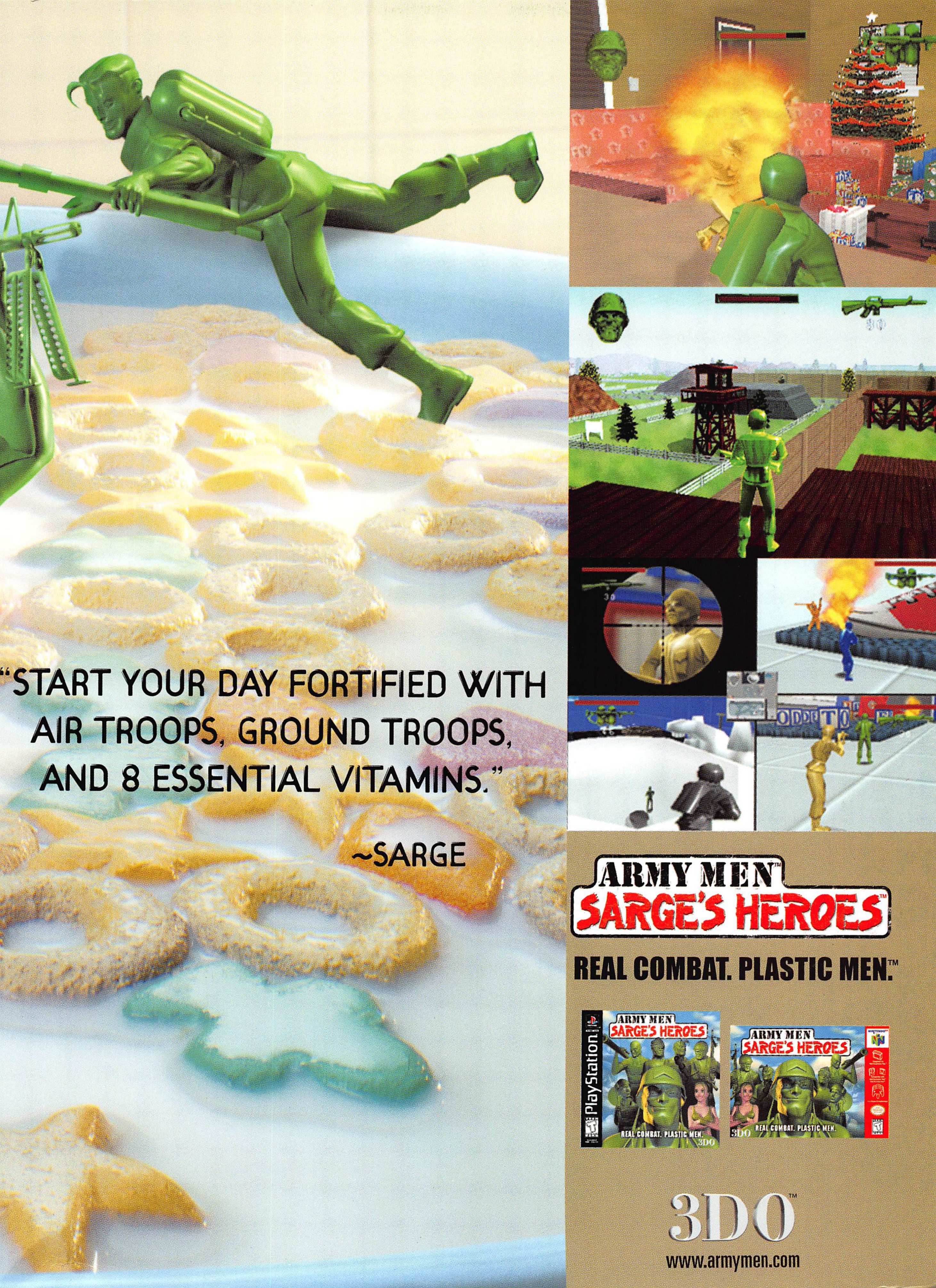

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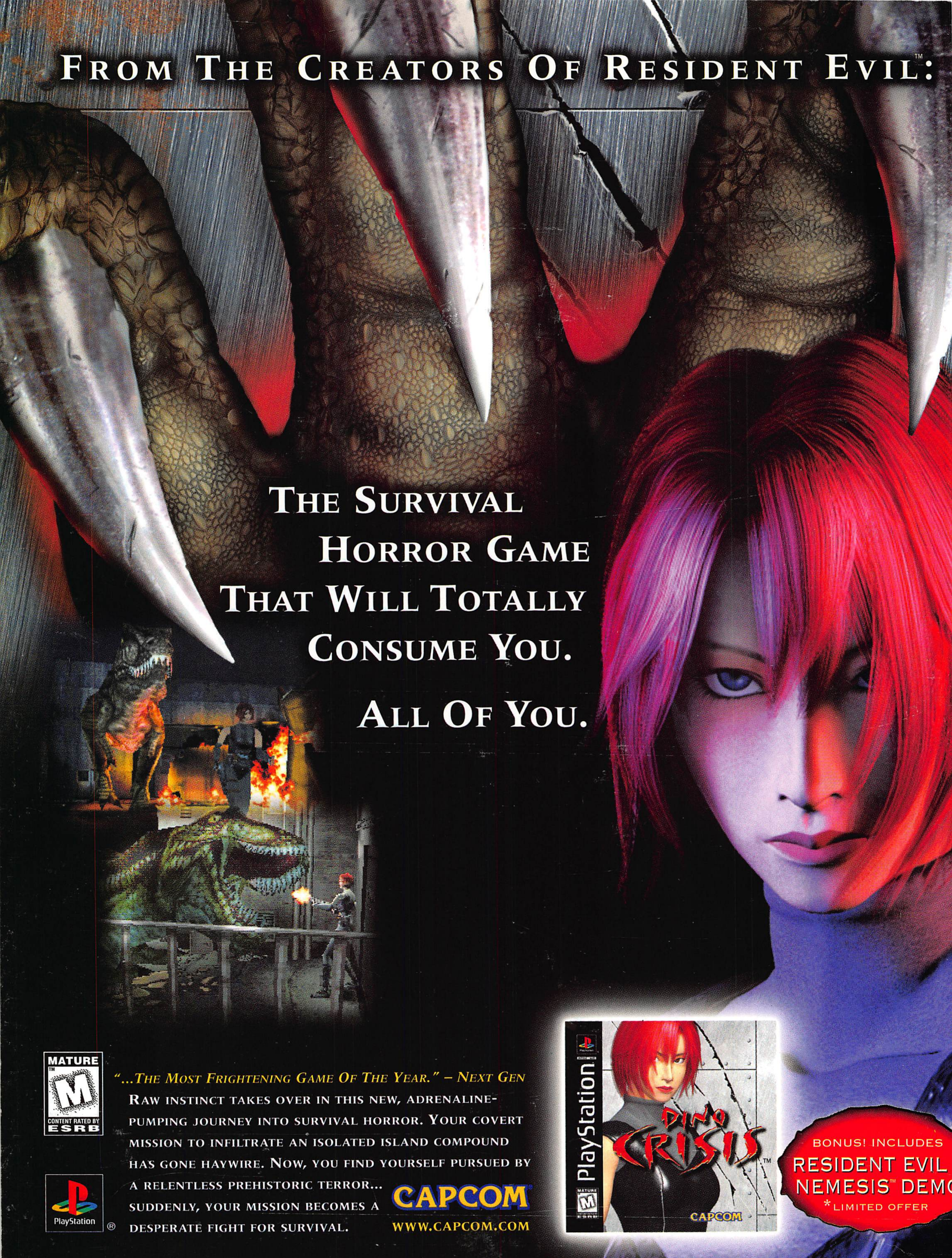

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